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for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

The Great Wall in Beijing

Edited by Global City Development Cooperation Council, Beijing

Editor-in-Chief: Lian Yuming



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| *Preface by Editor-in-Chief* |

The manuscript of *The Great Wall in Beijing* was finalised around 100 days before the opening of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. The book will come out in Chinese, English and French simultaneously when the Olympic torch is lighted and the Five-Ring Flag is fluttering in Beijing and at the foot of the Great Wall.

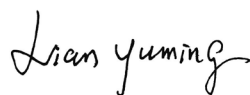
The Great Wall is a symbol of outstanding Chinese culture. The Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will stand out by re-examining the value of the Great Wall culture as part of the Games legacy in the global context, the historical context and the futuristic context, and by bridging the Chinese culture, the Chinese spirit, and the humanity through the medium of the Great Wall culture. It was against this background that the “Great Wall in Beijing” campaign was initiated and organised.

To make China’s voice heard and tell China’s story well, under the guidance of Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the International Institute for Urban Development, Beijing and Beijing Cosmopolis Cultural Exchange

Foundation co-organised a team of experts to write the book and translate it into English and French versions, with the hope to open a window onto China and build a cross-cultural exchange bridge for the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, as well as international organisations, guests, journalists participating in the Beijing 2022 Games.

The book celebrates mutual learning and respect between different cultures and shows how traditional Chinese culture, represented by the Great Wall culture, has contributed to the world. Designed as a reader on the Great Wall for the general public, this book may lead you to better appreciate the wonderful encounter between the Great Wall and the Olympic Winter Games, the story of Beijing, and the long history between the Olympic spirit which was born from the ancient Greek civilisation and the splendid 5,000-year Chinese civilisation, so that the Great Wall culture, a “golden business card” of the Chinese people, will shine brightly on the international stage of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

The Beijing 2022 Games are not only a sports gala, but also a tourist and cultural feast. This book is a tiny flower contributing to its splendor. I am confident that the Beijing 2022 Games will usher the Olympic Movement into a new era thanks to its pioneering and unique role in integrating traditional Chinese culture and Olympic culture.



President of Global City Development Cooperation Council, Beijing

Chairman of Beijing Cosmopolis Cultural Exchange Foundation

November 24, 2021

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The Beauty of the Great Wall of China

The 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO convened on July 25, 2021, in Fuzhou, Fujian announced that “Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China” was now registered in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Quanzhou, described as “the biggest port in the East” in *The Travels of Marco Polo*, once again aroused heated discussion and interest in exploring the prosperity of the East during the Song and Yuan dynasties. Meanwhile, there was another noteworthy highlight at the same session of the World Heritage Committee: the reviewing and approving of the report on the protection status of the Jiayuguan Great Wall which rated it as a demonstration case of world heritage protection and management. Though scholars at home and abroad considered it the great pity, *The Travels of Marco Polo*’s failure to mention the Great Wall hasn’t stopped people from tirelessly learning about and yearning for a visit.

Back in 1987, China saw a significant slice of cultural and natural heritage registered

in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the first time at the 11th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Paris, including the Palace Museum, the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, Mount Tai, the Great Wall, the Mausoleum of the First Emperor of Qin (including the burial grounds of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses), and the Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang. The Great Wall was considered an “unparalleled masterpiece” with the least controversy and hesitance in the process of assessing and selecting China’s first set of world heritage sites due to their undoubted “authenticity and integrity,” which perfectly complied with the world heritage criteria.

No matter where you choose to start your journey in the Central Plains, as long as you head north, you’ll definitely come across this “unparalleled masterpiece” and enjoy its exceptional beauty. Instead of a structure standing in isolation, the Great Wall is a combination of various factors: its design,

functions, environment, impact on economic and social development, and historical and cultural significance. China's Great Wall is unrivalled in the world with its grand civil-engineering scale, majestic grandeur, long history, and profound cultural significance. In other words, its beauty transcends the concept of a "continuous high wall artificially constructed of earth, stones, and bricks" and its architectural connotation. It is, instead, the most potent cultural gene found in the life experience of every Chinese in the long history of the nation.

After more than a dozen dynasties coming and going in the past 2,600 years, China's Great Wall has found itself built into a complete and three-dimensional military defence system consisting of walls, isolated lookout towers, beacons, passes (*guan*, mountain fortifications in ancient China), fortresses, and other structures that remain. Walking on these ancient structures of blue bricks and slabs past the towers, beacons, and fortresses that have weathered the years while remaining silent, visitors feel drawn to the Great Wall's magnificence. The Great Wall is not only a miniature of a period of social life but also a symbol of Chinese civilisation. It provides an actual venue of dialogue between the ancient and the modern and shapes people's recent life experiences. In fact, from the Great Wall of China to the Pyramids of Egypt, from royal palaces to antique courtyards, the artistic beauty of the architectural structures created by skilled artisans throughout the ages has shown itself and continuously impacted human development.

As we try to interpret the Great Wall's secret messages and review the ancient adage of "greeting friends from afar with pleasure," we continuously further deepen our understanding of a system of dialogues between civilisations – a system established

through the construction of the Great Wall meandering as it does between the agricultural and nomadic peoples. The two different modes of production conflicted and complemented each other. The Great Wall was built not for offensive but for defensive purposes. Neither did it serve for plundering raids. It was meant for ethnic assimilation instead, or rather, to help establish a complete order overarching various ethnic groups and regimes. Such a system of dialogues between civilisations has tenaciously bound China together in its unbroken development for thousands of years, thus enhancing the Chinese civilisation's national identification and ethnic tolerance and forming a governance system of unity that recognises differences. History has also adequately proved that this dialogue system is highly selective, adaptable, and inclusive during conflicts and integration of human civilisations. It also accounted for the establishment of a unified dynasty after the collapse of a previous one in Chinese history. As a production-oriented country, the benefit of material wealth binding Society comes from the growth of production under the conditions of order and peace, the yearnings for which has an irresistible appeal. Each brick or slab on the Great Wall is engrained with such longings of the Chinese people. They have been the general direction in which China has been moving forward in the past 5,000 years. As humanity has increasingly become a community with a shared future, where people's lives and fate are intertwined, the Great Wall's characteristic spirit of symbiosis, coexistence, and integrated development will undoubtedly present increasing practical significance.

Whether they be on the lofty mountains, across the rivers, and by the sea along the Great Wall, the Chinese people interpret its geological space from the three-dimensional



The Mutianyu section of the Great Wall (2020)

perspectives of production, existence, and ecology. Thereby, they come to appreciate the ecological wisdom of “the harmony of man and nature and the imitation of Nature by the Tao (Way)” and understand the Great Wall’s ecological value. The principle of building the Great Wall was to erect a natural barrier by placing it along rivers and against mountains. Behind the Great Wall’s defensive system connected by the passes, fortresses, Guancheng (literally, “pass city”) strongholds, and military towns was a complete and exuberant ecological system. Even today, the natural environmental barrier flanking the Great Wall keeps playing a role in protecting ecology and regulating the environment in which we live. Therefore, it isn’t an overstatement to call it the “Great Green Wall.” More importantly, the areas along the Great Wall have become a new vibrant economic zone that leapfrog in economic and social development with green development and innovation as the points of breakthrough and solving the ecological issues and poverty alleviation as the goal. The Olympic Winter Games provides new opportunities in its search for sustainable development.

China’s Great Wall is a miracle created by the working people in ancient China and a testimony to China’s long history. By learning about its past, present, and future, people can further perceive the Great Wall’s enormous scale, complex design, imposing manner, magnificent landscape, and unparalleled value. The Great Wall isn’t just a military defence project. And it is also a space for accommodating people engaged in land reclamation and a centre of economic exchanges. It is the media of the Chinese national spirit, a world cultural heritage, and a cultural and scenic site for tourism. In the long history of its development, the

Great Wall has continuously transformed its functions, thus creating a unique series of cultural phenomena centred around its architecture. The Great Wall enjoys a profound and extensive artistic connotation as an embodiment of accumulated traditional Chinese culture. China has proactively made explorative and innovative efforts to protect the Great Wall’s remains and inherit its cultural significance. It is based on this that the Great Wall is increasingly recognised by the world, becoming a symbol of the Chinese Nation and living heritage. The Great Wall’s conservation and inheritance are our shared responsibility and genuine requirement for continuing human civilisation and the world’s sustainable development.

Today, those who climb and walk on the Great Wall can experience the long, mellowed history of China; the profound, splendid Chinese culture; and the rich, colourful tourist resources. Simultaneously, they can also feel the vitality of China as it unrelentingly advances to the centre of the world stage. And this vitality will burst out with the advent of a wonderful sports event. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), announced in 2015 that Beijing had been selected to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. As a result, Beijing will become the first city in the history of Olympic Games to successfully bid for both the Olympic Summer and Winter Games. What’s more remarkable is that a great Olympic Games will be unveiled in Beijing that boasts the essence of the Great Wall along with Zhangjiakou also known as the “Great Wall Museum of Past Dynasties.” The five-ringed Olympic flag will flutter in the wind at the foot of the Great Wall, and many Olympic venues will be staged around the site. “Sports as an organised undertaking is not only a game. Nor is it the setting of new records.

It's also a kind of sublimation and spiritual recovery.”¹ An ice and snow sports event taking place at the foot of the Great Wall will allow 300 million Chinese people to “get on the ice and snow” and more foreigners to “ascend the Great Wall,” thus opening a new chapter in the history of Olympic Games. It will show at a deeper level that the brilliance of modern sports is inherently connected with the beauty entailed by the ancient Great Wall of China.

For a Chinese to understand the Chinese history or a foreigner to fathom the real China, perhaps there's no other practical approach than to get close to the Great Wall. In its long history, the Great Wall has witnessed Chinese people's sufferings and their beautiful qualities: diligence, wisdom, bravery, and kindness. It has also testified to Chinese people's long-standing struggles for national independence and self-improvement. The beauty of the Great Wall of China also stems from its profound spiritual connotation. For several thousand years, the Chinese on both sides of the Wall created a

legendary history of earth-shaking heroism. As one line of the Chinese anthem goes, “With our very flesh and blood, let us build our new Great Wall.” It vividly portrays China's courageous and indomitable national spirit, demonstrating the Chinese people's loftiness and grandeur of eternal significance. China's Great Wall with its majestic appearance and profound spiritual connotation is simply soul-stirring.

The majesty of 100,000 *li* (50,000 kilometres) and weathered sophistication of a few thousand years have imparted to the Great Wall untold charm whether it be explicit or implicit. The challenge presented to comprehending its allure doesn't lie in the lack of historical records. The challenge comes from the overwhelming amount of its connotation. Each visit gives us a fresh understanding. As we keep discovering the beauty of its architecture, endurance, ecological impact, significance of ethnic assimilation, and scenery of ice and snow... We start ruminating over life, world, and future, thereby perpetuating the “beauty.”

1 Karl Theodor Jaspers. *Situation der Zeit (The Spiritual Situation of the Age)* [M], trans. Wang Defeng. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2013.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2016)



Part I

The Architectural Beauty

Architecture is a monument of time. The beauty of architecture is more than “glitter.” The Chinese civilisation has existed for five thousand years, and ancient Chinese architecture is invested with the historical lineage of an ancient civilisation and demonstrates the infinite charm of the Chinese culture and civilisation. The Great Wall is a great military project in ancient China. After more than two thousand years of trials and setbacks, the Great Wall’s function as a defence facility faded. But its aesthetic features have continued to accumulate and grow in the evolution of history. Today, when we appreciate the beauty of the Great Wall, what catches our attention first is its architectural structure. The wall boasts a gigantic civil engineering project with a perfect design and aesthetic layout and arrangement, making the Great Wall valuable as an architectural heritage. Therefore, it occupies an important position in the history of architecture in China and the world.

A Wonder in the World History of Architecture

The immense value of the Great Wall's architecture, as a historical heritage has been professionally assessed and is highly recognised at home in China and abroad. The World Heritage Committee of the UNESCO describes the Great Wall in these terms: "In the year 220 BCE, Qin Shihuang ordered that sections of earlier fortifications should be linked to form a single defence system against invasions from the north. The construction continued up to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE). At that time, the Great Wall became the world's largest military structure. Its strategic importance is matched by its architectural significance."¹ In 1961, the Chinese government announced the first selected set of key cultural relics for national protection, including the Shanhaiguan Pass, Badaling Great Wall, and the Jiayuguan Pass. In 1984, Beijing included the Great Wall

(the Beijing section) in its list of key cultural relics placed under municipal protection. In 1987, UNESCO registered the Great Wall in its World Heritage List. In June 2001, the Chinese government announced the inscription of the Great Wall's Simatai section in its fifth selection of key cultural relics placed under national protection. The main reason that the Great Wall has gained such recognition is that "it occupies an important place in China's architectural history. Embodying the essence of the Great Wall, the Beijing section cannot be ignored in any study of ancient Chinese architecture."²

"Remains of Time"

The world's cultural and natural heritage is an important result of human civilisation

1 World Heritage Convention. World Heritage List: The Great Wall [R/OL]. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/438>.

2 Dong Yaohui. Some Theoretical Issues of the Studies of the Great Wall [C]. Luo Zhewen. *Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Great Wall*. Changchun: Jilin Renmin Publishing House, 1995.

and evolution, and an essential medium for promoting mutual exchanges and learning among different cultures. Protecting, inheriting, and making good use of these precious remains are necessary for human civilisation and global sustainable development, and they are also the shared responsibility of humankind.

According to the definition of UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee, world heritage is priceless and irreplaceable assets of humanity as a whole, and it includes cultural properties and natural landscape of outstanding significance and universal value recognised by all mankind. There are three categories of world heritage. As of August 25, 2021, the total number of world heritage sites has reached 1,154 distributed in 167 countries globally. Among them, 39 are mixed cultural and natural heritage sites, 218 are natural heritage sites, and 897 are cultural heritage sites.

As a country with 5,000 years of history, China has inherited extremely precious world cultural and natural heritage, part of humanity's shared treasure. Up to now, China boasts 56 world heritage sites, ranking top in the world. China also enjoys possessing sites in all the three categories of world heritage: cultural, natural, and mixed. China's world cultural and natural heritage embodies the Chinese Nation's unique spiritual value, its way of thinking, and displaying imagination, vitality, and creativity. It crystalises the wisdom of all its ethnic groups. They are also treasures of the human civilisation. Each cultural relic or natural site is invested with the ancient Chinese's rich and emotional background spanning thousands of years, and still perceivable today.

Beijing is one of the cities with the most World Cultural Heritage sites in the world. Between 1987 and 2013, UNESCO inscribed

six representative historical sites and human remains onto the World Cultural Heritage List. They include the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, and the Ming Tombs (Shisanling). They represent not only the unique urban temperament that Beijing has formed in its long history of development but also the historic height that China has reached in the evolution of world civilisation. They are the fruits of human civilisation with genuine international influence. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, jointly applied by Beijing and Hebei, Shandong, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu, was officially recognised as a world cultural heritage site in June 2014. Additionally, Beijing has 138 key heritage sites for national protection, 357 for municipal protection, and over 1,000¹ for district or county protection. In its unique historical development of civilisation, Beijing enjoys a vast and coherent framework in its historic and cultural past and has thus established distinct geographical features. People can feel the infinite humanistic charm through the contents and forms of tradition, ethnic, and regionalisation.

China is a staunch supporter and practitioner of the Convention Concerning the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection and joined it on December 12, 1985, and was elected a member of the World Heritage Committee on October 29, 1999. China has successively hosted two World Heritage Committee meetings since then. An essential milestone, such a meeting is the highest-level international conference in world heritage protection. China hosted the 28th Session of the World Heritage Committee (World Heritage Convention) in Suzhou in 2004 and the 44th Session of World Heritage Committee in Fuzhou in 2021.

1 According to the website of the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau, www.beijing.gov.cn.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2017)

For many years, China has protected world heritage for the true purpose of promoting social progress. In 1987, China saw the Great Wall and the Forbidden City become China's first set of world heritage sites and by 2021, China had 56 world heritage sites, ranking among the top countries worldwide. In 2002, China launched the "Rescue and Protection of China's Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" project. As of 2020, China became the No.1 country globally, with 42 intangible cultural relics inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. China has been exploring a path to protect and inherit traditional culture that suits its national conditions during the entire process. Simultaneously, China has striven to play a role bridging cultural exchanges among different civilisations in the field of world cultural and natural heritage protection. Such interactions and mutual learning have enriched culture and

civilisation. Culture is the best way to open the door of exchanges among various countries. In recent years, China's world cultural and natural heritage has frequently appeared on the world stage, having an appeal to many foreigners yearning for this mysterious ancient country in the East. They feel connected as neighbours despite vast distances. The Great Wall, soul-stirring as it is, not only appears glamorous but also has remains buried under the ground covered with layers of weeds going back several dynasties. They are the "remains of time."¹ All the incredible power they possess that we can feel is precisely the unfulfilled expectations we need to carry out. By doing so, we can strengthen our confidence in building a global community of shared future through world heritage projects through a broader range of cultural and civilisation exchanges and mutual learning.

1 Zhu Yong. *A Tale of Two Cities: A Record of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Forbidden City Press, 2009.

Two Thousand Years of History and Five Thousand Kilometres

The Great Wall is as new as it was a couple of thousand years ago. A gigantic civil engineering feature of a long history like the Great Wall is rare in the world. In the construction history of more than 2,000 years, the Great Wall has gone through 12 historical periods, including the Spring and Autumn Period, the Warring States Period, and the dynasties of Qin, Han, Tang, and Ming in ancient China. The first allusion to the Great Wall was the tale of King You of Zhou teasing the dukes and princesses by lighting up the war-warning beacon-fire in times of peace merely to win a smile from his concubine. As early as the Spring and Autumn Period in the 7th century BCE, Chu State built the Square City Wall of Chu to defend itself against invasion by other states and unveiled the curtain on the construction of the Great Wall recorded in Chinese history. The Great Wall of the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period was a product of the conflicts between some vassal states before the formation of a unified, multi-ethnic China, and it witnessed the geopolitics and changes of the farming areas in northern China from the 7th to the 3rd century BCE.

Three dynasties, *i.e.*, Qin (221–205 BCE), Han (202 BCE–220 CE), and Ming (1368–1644 CE) built the Great Wall stretching five thousand kilometres. The Ming dynasty was the last one to build and rebuild the Great Wall on a large scale. The existing remains of the Great Wall in China are mainly the Ming Great Wall built in the 14th–17th century.

The “Great Wall of Five Thousand kilometres” came into shape during Qin Shihuang’s reign. The Qin Great Wall started from Lintao (in present-day Gansu Province, China) in the west. It ended in Liaodong (part

of today’s Liaoning Province) in the east, with more than 5,000 kilometres. During the Warring States Period, the states of Qi, Wei, Zhao, Qin, Yan, and Zhongshan also successively built “walls to defend themselves against each other.” The Qin, Zhao, and Yan states were adjacent to the powerful nomadic Xiongnu in the north. While building the walls to defend themselves, they also constructed the “walls against the Xiongnu” in the north. Almost all the monarchs in the subsequent dynasties strengthened and repaired the walls. After the Qin state unified China as the Qin Dynasty, it abandoned the walls separating the former states and connected those on the northern border of the former states of Qin, Zhao, and Yan. It expanded and repaired them into what is known today as the “Great Wall of Five Thousand kilometres.”

The Han Dynasty built the longest section of the Great Wall, starting from today’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the west and ending at the inner and outer lines of the Great Wall with their beacon towers and fortifications in Liaodong in the east. The Han-Dynasty Great Wall was constructed based on that dating back to the Qin Dynasty. Faced with the Xiongnu’s harassment, Liu Bang, Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty, and other Han emperors like Emperor Wendi and Emperor Jingdi had walls made to defend themselves against the Xiongnu. After recovering the land occupied by the Xiongnu, they expanded the Qin Great Wall and even built outer cities that extended over 10,000 kilometres. The Great Wall of the Qin and Han dynasties was the critical product of the first period of the Chinese unification, witnessing the first round of large-scale conflicts, exchanges, and integration between the agricultural and the nomadic civilisations in northern China from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Since then, a complete



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2019)

system of national military defence and its corresponding engineering technology system came into existence.

The Great Wall built in the Ming Dynasty was more than 6,000 kilometres long, starting from the Jiayuguan Pass in the west and the Yalu River in the east. To prevent the Mongol tribes from invading the south, the construction project continued over a few dozen periods, spanning more than 230 years, adding steep walls, deep trenches, fortresses, and passes. The Ming Great Wall was significantly improved in terms of engineering technology and overall scale in comparison with those in the previous historical periods. It demonstrated the highest achievements in the construction of military defence systems in ancient China. It witnessed more large-scale conflicts, exchanges, and integration between different civilisations and cultures such as farming, nomadic civilisation, fishing and hunting, and animal husbandry in northern China from the 14th to the 17th century.

The World's Best Linear World Cultural Heritage

The Great Wall of China is the most significant linear cultural heritage in the world. After over 2,000 years of construction and reconstruction, it has been developed into a linear defence system with multiple functional units at places. Some sections even have multiple parallel walls, creating some depth in space. The Great Wall sometimes climbs on mountain ridges, sometimes slowly follows streams and rivers, or sometimes cuts through ravines and valleys. Taking advantage of precipitous mountains and dangerous rivers, the Great Wall is a perfect combination of artificial defence systems and natural barriers, resulting

in a rich cultural and grandiose architectural remains with tremendous scientific and artistic values drawing worldwide attention.

The Great Wall's beauty lies in its gargantuan body and its majestic appearance. On October 26, 2006, National Cultural Heritage Administration and National Administration of Surveying, Mapping, and Geoinformation jointly launched the project to survey the Great Wall resources. The prelude to a comprehensive scientific survey of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall started in May 2007. On June 5, 2012, the National Cultural Heritage Administration announced that after nearly five years of investigation and identification, the total length of the Great Wall of China was 21,196.18 kilometres. Among them, the Ming Great Wall extends 8,851.8 kilometres long.

Another piece of data reflecting the size of the Great Wall, indeed an enormous civil engineering project, is also incredible. According to some rough statistics, if a wall of five metres high and a metre thick were constructed with the materials of the Great Wall, it would circle the Earth's equator over thirty or forty times. If a road of five metres wide and 40 centimetres thick were built, it could circle the Earth's equator over a hundred times. This estimate is based only on the materials used to build the walls. If the construction materials from the Guancheng strongholds, fortresses, barracks, bastions, other accommodations for guards and battalions, and beacon towers were included in the tally, such a road or wall would circle the Earth hundreds of times. The scale of the project is self-explanatory.¹

The Great Wall sprawls out widely. After constructions and reconstructions in various dynasties, it extends to most parts of northern China. Remains of its ancient walls or beacon towers can be found in Beijing, Tianjin,

1 Luo Zhenwen. *History of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2018.

Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shandong, Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang. Among them, the earliest remains of the Great Wall mainly include the walls of the Qi, Qin, Chu, Yan, Zhao, Wei, Zhongshan states during the Warring States Period. The total length of the walls amounts to about 3,100 kilometres. They primarily spread over Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Shandong, Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia and Inner Mongolia.

China's Great Wall embodies the connections between and changes of cultural heritage both tangible and intangible. Interactions and exchanges have imparted to the cultural remains their commonality, peculiarity, diversity, and typicality along the cultural belt. Together, they have given rise to rich and colourful presentations and closer internal connections. There are over 40,000 sites with beacon towers and bastions related to the ancient Great Wall of various dynasties. Regarding the existing parts of the Great Wall of the Qin and Han dynasties, totaling nearly 3,700 kilometres, there are over 2,100 sections of walls and moats and 2,600 isolated structures, almost 300 passes and bastions, and ten related facilities. Besides, there are also some remains of the Han Dynasty beacon towers. Most of the structures were made using earth or stone walls. However, the walls found in the west of Gansu Province were primarily made of reeds, salt cedar (*tamarix ramosissima*) shrubs, and saxaul (*haloxylon ammodendron*) wood mixed with sand. The beacon towers mainly were constructed using compacted earth, while some were laid with clods or sun-dried mud bricks. As for the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty, more than 5,200 sections of walls and moats survived. There are also the remains of about 17,500 stand-alone structures, around 1,300 passes and bastions,

and over 140 related facilities. The eastern part of the Ming Great Wall consists essentially of masonry: walls laid with bricks clad in earth or stones and a mixture of bricks and stones. The western part of the Ming Great Wall was primarily constructed with compacted or heaped earth.

Generally speaking, as a large-scale linear architectural structure, China's Great Wall has the characteristics of continuity, integration, and defensiveness. The continuity of the Great Wall is manifested both in time and in its physical entity. The Great Wall is not the product of a specific era but the result of a historical continuum. The Great Wall extends nonstop, with its walls connected with and passes, bastions, beacon towers, and other related facilities. It integrates itself with the local topographical, geological and climatic conditions. It merges into the local social culture, aesthetic trends, and humanistic environments, perfecting the Great Wall's structures in terms of its route, location, architectural style, construction material, technology, and layout of critical elements. As a result, the integrated role of the Great Wall as a military defence system and a vehicle of border trade and cultural exchanges has been enhanced. The defensive nature of the Great Wall is closely related to the purpose of its construction. The Great Wall was constructed with the best technology of its time. Easy to defend and difficult to attack, it is solid and lasting. Corresponding to the facilities of the Great Wall that each performs its particular function is the gradually improved military system. As a military defence system, the Great Wall played a significant role in the era of cold weapons. As a result, it has attracted countless visitors, and people are awed by the Great Wall's splendour and majesty.

The Best Witness of Formidable Horseback Warriors

“No *pipa* fife tune can alleviate the sorrow of border soldiers. The autumn moon shines high upon the Great Wall.” For thousands of years, the majestic Great Wall has witnessed the changes of seasons and heroic deeds of gallant warriors. The section in Beijing is the best part of China’s Great Wall. Extending about 573 kilometres, the part of the Great Wall in Beijing is an important object of study that cannot be ignored in the research on its culture and the history of Chinese architecture. According to the approval document of the National Cultural Heritage Administration on the reconnaissance assessment of the Beijing Great Wall on May 8, 2012, the existing Great Wall in Beijing was built during the Northern Qi and Ming dynasties. In the first year of Tianbao of the Northern Qi Dynasty (550 CE), it occupied the eastern part of northern China, which included Beijing. To defend against the northern nomads and the separatist regimes in the west, the Northern Qi Dynasty built the Great Wall on a large scale many times, basically forming two main lines of defence. The first was beyond the northern border, e.g., from northwest Shanxi to the Shanhaiguan Pass in Hebei. The second concerned the key towns within the border, starting from Pianguan, Shanxi, in the west, to Changping, Beijing, in the east. The Great Wall built by Gao Yang, Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi Dynasty, before the 7th year of Tianbao (556 CE) is 1,500 kilometres long. It can be said to be the largest of all the walls built in China between the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the “Sixteen Kingdoms” (304–439 CE) period and the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589 CE) over nearly three hundred years. It also took the most time and labour. This part of the Great Wall had a greater impact

on later generations. The existing Great Wall of the Northern Qi Dynasty primarily lies in present-day Liaoning, Beijing, Hebei and Shanxi. Three sections of the Great Wall of the Northern Qi Dynasty traverse Beijing. They are respectively the section from Nankou of Beijing to Datong of Shanxi built in the sixth year of Tianbao, the section from the northwest of Datong to the Bohai Sea built in the seventh year of Tianbao, and the section from Gubeikou, Beijing, to the Shanhaiguan Pass built in the first year of Tiantong. Besides the three existing sections in Beijing, the Northern Qi Dynasty also constructed some parts of the Great Wall in the third year of Tianbao (552 CE), the eighth year of Tianbao (557 CE), and the second year of Heqing (563 CE) (see Table 1-1-1).

China’s Great Wall in Beijing was predominantly built in the Ming Dynasty, with many sections constructed based on the Northern Qi walls. The construction of the Great Wall continued throughout the nearly 300 hundred years of the Ming Dynasty. The construction technology was upgraded and developed, and the wall’s scale and robustness reached a pinnacle.

The Gubeikou section of the Great Wall, comprising the walls built by the Northern Qi and the Ming dynasties, is a comparatively complete section of the Great Wall system. The Gubeikou Great Wall lies in the southeast of present-day Gubeikou Town, Miyun District, Beijing. It was the largest gateway in the Yanshan Mountains to the North China Plain. Historically, it was known as being able to “control Youyan (an area covering present-day north Hebei, Beijing, Tianjin, Liaoning, and part of DPRK) in the south and the desert area in the north.” Gubeikou had always been a battleground for military strategists. After the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty, the Mings rebuilt the Great Wall mainly based



The Wohushan section of the Great Wall (2017)

on the walls erected by the Northern Qi Dynasty. Gubeikou was one of the passes built under the command of Xu Da, a famous Ming general. He also had a Guancheng stronghold and supporting facilities built here.¹ Gubeikou is one of the passes on the Great Wall that witnessed many wars: 138 recorded battles of various scales. Gubeikou was the primary battleground for the Gengxu Crisis (a war that the Northern Yuan Dynasty started against the Ming Dynasty in the year of Gengxu, namely, 1550 CE) and a war of resisting Japanese aggression that broke out in 1933. Besides, the war also inspired the composition of the theme song of the movie *Fengyun Ernü* (*Children of Troubled Times*), named “Yiyongjun Jinxingqu (March of the Volunteers),” which later became the anthem of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

The Simatai section of China’s Great Wall was built in the 7th year of Tianbao of the Northern Qi Dynasty (556 CE) and was rebuilt in the early years of the Hongwu (1328–1398 CE) and Longqing (1567–1572 CE) reigns of the Ming Dynasty. The existing Great Wall structures were the products of the Ming Dynasty. The Simatai section of the Great Wall was designed and built under the command of the famous Ming generals Liu Yingjie and Tan Lun and Commander Qi Jiguang, who was also well-known for leading the battles against the Japanese pirate raiders. Simatai was under the jurisdiction of Jizhouzhen City, one of the nine towns of extreme military significance during the Ming Dynasty. The dynasty established four significant military barracks and passes, *i.e.*, Qiangzi Lu (literally, route, an administrative division), Caojia Lu,

1 Dong Yaohui. *An Informal Discussion of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Contemporary World Publishing House, 2017: 90.

Table 1-1-1 A List of China's Great Wall (the Northern Qi sections) in Beijing¹

District	Name	Location
Miyun District	No.1 Northern Qi Lookout Tower of Chaoguan Village in Gubeikou Town	Chaoguan Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Miyun District	No.2 Northern Qi Lookout Tower of Chaoguan Village in Gubeikou Town	Chaoguan Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Miyun District	No.3 Northern Qi Lookout Tower of Chaoguan Village in Gubeikou Town	Chaoguan Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Miyun District	The Northern Qi Great Wall of Chaoguan Village in Gubeikou Town	On the hill northwest of Chaoguan Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Miyun District	Mount Panlong Northern Qi Great Wall of Gubeikou Village in Gubeikou Town	Mount Panlong to the north of Gubeikou Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Miyun District	The Great Wall of Simatai Village in Gubeikou Town	On the hill to the north of Simatai Village, Gubeikou Town, Miyun District
Pinggu District	Taopeng No.1 Beacon Tower of the Taopeng section of the Great Wall in Pinggu District	Two kilometres south of Pianshi Village, Shandongzhuang Town, Pinggu District
Pinggu District	Taopeng No.2 Beacon Tower of the Taopeng section of the Great Wall in Pinggu District	About 1.2 kilometres southwest of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town
Pinggu District	No.3 Beacon Tower of the Taopeng section of the Great Wall in Pinggu District	Two kilometres west of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town
Pinggu District	Taopeng No.4 Beacon Tower of the Taopeng section of the Great Wall in Pinggu District	Two kilometres north of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town
Pinggu District	Taopeng No.5 Beacon Tower of the Taopeng section of the Great Wall in Pinggu District	About 2.5 kilometres north of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town
Pinggu District	The Northern Qi Great Wall of Taopeng Village in Shandongzhuang Town	Start: One kilometre southwest of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town End: About 1.2 kilometres southwest of Taopeng Village, Shandongzhuang Town
Changping District	No.1 Northern Qi Great Wall Beacon Tower of Changling Town of Changping District	On the 3,000-metre ridge northwest of Heishanzhai Village, Changling Town, Changping District.
Changping District	No.2 Northern Qi Great Wall Beacon Tower of Changling Town of Changping District	On the 3,000-metre ridge northwest of Xinzhuang Village, Changling Town, Changping District
Changping District	The Mapaoquan Northern Qi Great Wall of Liucun Town in Changping District	Mapaoquan Village, Liucun Town, Changping District

1 National Cultural Heritage Administration. Approval for the Recognition of the Great Wall in Beijing [EB/OL]. (2012-05-24). http://www.ncha.gov.cn/art/2012/5/24/art_2237_23490.html.

District	Name	Location
Changping District	The Dalinggou Northern Qi Great Wall of Changling Town in Changping District	Dalinggou Village, Changling (now Shisanling) Town, Changping District
Yanqing District	The Shixia section of the Northern Qi Great Wall in Badaling Town	Start: About 1.1 kilometres west of Shixia Village, Badaling Town End: About 1.5 kilometres southwest of Shixia Village, Badaling Town
Huairou District	The Northern Qi Great Wall in the north of Dazhenyu Village in Bohai Town	Start: About 700 metres north of Dazhenyu Village, Bohai Town End: At No.200 lookout tower of the Ming Great Wall one kilometre north of Dazhenyu Village, Bohai Town
Huairou District	The Northern Qi Great Wall of Shayubeigou Longquanzhuang Village in Bohai Town	Start: About 200 metres north of Mount Dong in Shayubeigou Longquanzhuang Village, Bohai Town End: About 200 metres north of Mount Dong in Shayubeigou Longquanzhuang Village, Bohai Town
Mentougou District	The Beiyanggou Northern Qi Great Wall of Matao Village in Yanchi Town	Start: The northern end of the Beiyanggou section of the Great Wall, Matao Village, Yanchi Town End: The southern end of the Beiyanggou section of the Great Wall, Matao Village, Yanchi Town
Mentougou District	The Dongtailing Northern Qi Great Wall in Panglugou of Matao Village, Yanchi Town	Start: On the southern-end ridge Mount Xibei of Matao Village, Yanchi Town, Mentougou District End: On the northern-end ridge of Mount Xibei of Matao Village, Yanchi Town, Mentougou District
Mentougou District	The Northern Qi Great Wall from Beixiling in Dacun Village in Yanchi Town to Desheng Temple	Start: On the public road east of Beixiling, Dacun Village, Yanchi Town End: On the hillside west of Desheng Temple, Dacun Village, Yanchi Town
Mentougou District	The Fangliang Village Northern Qi Great Wall of Yanchi Town	Start: On the top of Nanling at Fangliang Village, Yanchi Town End: On the ridge of Dongling at Fangliang Village, Yanchi Town
Mentougou District	The Mount Dongling Northern Qi Great Wall in Jiangshuihe Village, Qingshui Town	Start: At the 2,303-metre mark on the highest peak of Mount Dongling End: At the tip of the southern end of the wall, southeast of the mark of Mount Dongling's top

Gubeikou, and Shitang Lu, with Shixia being the centre. Each *lu* was responsible for the management and protection of several passes and battlements in some particular sections of the Great Wall. During the late Ming Dynasty, the Beijing area faced a severe threat from the Mongol tribes, and the Simatai section of the

Great Wall played a crucial defensive role. In the defence zone, soldiers were trained in peacetime before going to wage battles with the enemies. Therefore, Gubeikou became a systematic combat-readiness fortification. The precipitous Simatai section of the Great Wall boasts the essence of the Great Wall



The Gubeikou section of the Great Wall (2017)

architecture. It is the best-preserved ancient architectural site of the Ming Great Wall, with its original appearance kept intact. Well-known for its strategic position, inaccessible location, unexpected features, ingenious design, and complete supporting facilities, it is dubbed the “Museum of the Great Wall.” The Gubeikou Great Wall was placed on the top of the “25 Must-See Scenic Spots of the World” list by *The Times* in 2012.

The “Beijing Node” is part of the Jiankou Great Wall. The Northern Qi Dynasty first built it, and the Ming reconstructed it. It was initially the Tianxianyu Great Wall. Jiankou, meaning “Arrow Knock,” is a striking metaphor: situated in the present-day Huairou District of Beijing, it appears like a fully drawn bow ready to shoot an arrow. The “Beijing Node” is an exceptional spot on the Beijing section of China’s Great Wall, where three important garrison towns along the Ming Great Wall bordered each other. It was also the hub demarcating the inner

and outer lines of the Great Wall. The three garrison towns refer to three military centres. The inner and outer lines of the Great Wall branches from the Shanhaiguan Pass to the west. A branch meanders southwest from the Zijingguan Pass in Hebei to the Niangziguan Pass in Shanxi. The other zigzags southwest from Zhangjiakou to Datong, and Jiayuguan Pass, thus forming the inner and outer Great Walls that strengthened the function of a military system across the north. The name “Beijing Node” originated in 1985. That year, the Geological Remote Sensing Centre of the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources of China used aerial remote sensing technology to conduct a comprehensive survey of the spatial distribution pattern of the Great Wall in Beijing. The centre of the Great Wall runs as two systems from east to west and from north to west. They named the place where the two systems converged as the “Beijing Node.” The Great Wall here is primarily a structure of minimally damaged brick facing. The walls

are tall and wide on the top, with concentrated gate towers. The walls are continuous and complete, with their parapets and crenels reasonably intact. The “Beijing Node” is of great significance not only in the distribution pattern of the Great Wall in Beijing but also in the study of the inner and outer Great Wall systems.¹

The Mutianyu section of China’s Great Wall was initially built in the Northern Qi Dynasty. Under the supervision of Xu Da, a general under Zhu Yuanzhang, Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty, it was rebuilt on its remains in the first year of Hongwu (1368 CE). It is the essence of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. This section of the Great Wall connects Gubeikou to the east and the Juyongguan Pass to the west. It had been a military hub protecting the capital Beijing and its environs ever since ancient times. Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty ordered the relocation of the capital from Nanjing to Beijing in the 4th year of Yongle (1406 CE) to counter the threat of the Northern Yuan Dynasty. Sitting between the Juyongguan Pass and Gubeikou, only 50-some kilometres from Beijing, the strategic position of the Great Wall at Mutianyu appeared more critical. Nicely referred to as “An Impregnable Pass on a Precipitous Ridge,” it became one of the essential gateways protecting Beijing, the capital of the Ming Dynasty and the location of the Ming Mausoleum. In the 3rd year of Longqing (1569 CE), Emperor Muzong of the Ming Dynasty ordered Qi Jiguang and his army to renovate the 1,000-kilometre Great Wall, including the Mutianyu section. The renovation greatly strengthened its defence capabilities and made it look more majestic. Completed in the autumn of the 5th year of Longqing (1571

CE), this construction has lasted to this day. The most prominent feature of the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall is the fishtail arrow slits on both sides of the wall. This unique pass design is pretty rare on the Great Wall at large. Integrating the unique architectural design with the strategic natural terrain is of high historical, scientific, artistic, and ornamental values.

Judging from the construction history of China’s Great Wall in Beijing, we can trace many important nodes back to a longer history. Through the understanding of the spatial distribution, architectural forms, construction techniques of these nodes and through the comprehension of the historical events, cultural exchanges, trade contacts, stories, and legends related to the Great Wall, we can learn more about the construction and evolution of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty and even other sections of China’s Great Wall in Beijing than those of the Northern Qi Great Wall.

The construction of military facilities in Yanhecheng (literally, a city along the rivers) began at the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 CE). The Yanhecheng section of the Great Wall located in the Yongding River Grand Canyon in Mentougou District, Beijing is adjacent to Chengzituo in the south and Yongding River in the north. After Beijing became the capital, the strategic position of the Yanhecheng area became prominent because of its location at the key point where Beijing was accessible to Inner Mongolia. With mountain passes on precipitous terrain, it was a battleground for military strategists. Built along the ridges of the mountains, the Yanhecheng section of the Great Wall demonstrates the outstanding characteristics of inner line of the Great Wall. It was called Sanchacun (literally, Fork Village) as it stood at the opening of a

1 Yu Shuwen. *A Sea Change on the Back of a Dragon: Walking on the Huairou Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, 2016.





The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2019)



Yanhecheng (2020)

valley with a few streams traversing it. Later, an army was stationed there and renamed it Yanhekou (an opening along a river). After a city's establishment, the locals came to call it Yanhecheng, which eventually became its official name. Building the Great Wall at Yanhecheng reached a climax in the mid-Ming Dynasty and was completed during the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty (1573–1620 CE). Yanhecheng became a more significant strategic location because of two well-known historical events: frontier conflicts between the Ming and the Northern Yuan dynasties known as the Tumu and the Gengxu crises. Afterward, the rulers of the Ming Dynasty were highly wary of the Mongol and other ethnic minorities in the north. They gave special attention to garrisoning the military gateway in the west of Beijing. Therefore, they focused on strengthening the military facilities, including the Sanchacun and Yanhecheng areas. The latter housed garrisons from the late Yuan period up to 1919 CE, when they were

disbanded once and for all. In the Ming and Qing dynasties and routine military affairs, the garrisons in the west of Beijing gradually instilled the customs of having the locals raise horses, build solacing Buddhist temples, and carry out activities to mitigate homesickness. Today, the city wall of Yanhecheng is still in good shape, and the city gates in the four directions still exist. Some of the buildings in the city maintain their ancient looks while showing a degree of weathering. There used to be a dozen or so Buddhist temples, but most of them have now disappeared. The theatre of the Qing Dynasty was more or less intact. The city houses quite a few dainty *siheyuan* (courtyards surrounded by houses) typical of mountain villages. They were uniquely designed, and their isolated calm settings give the impression of belonging to another world. Dozens of stone steles of various sizes had inscriptions on them recording the chronicles of Yanhecheng, providing the later generations with a trove of archived information.

The historical records of the Beijing area are relatively complete. The history related to the construction of the Great Wall can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. This was when military facilities were built in the Juyongguan Pass. At that time, vassal states set up barriers at the passes. As wars between them became more frequent, the inspections at the border checkpoints became increasingly rigorous. Against this historical background, the Yan State set up a fortress, known (in the state of Qin) as “Juyong Fortress,” in the northwest of the Juyongguan Pass. The fort included parts of the Changping, Yanqing, Huailai, and Xuanhua districts of Beijing. It was nothing but a pass during the Western Han Dynasty (202 BCE–8 CE), lying between Juyong and the military capital. The Eastern Han (25–220 CE) established a Guancheng stronghold here and changed the name “Juyong Fortress” to “Juyongguan Pass,” which has since remained the same for the past 2,000 years. The Northern Qi Dynasty integrated the Juyongguan Pass into the Great Wall, turning it into a vital gateway and an integral part of the Great Wall defence line. The Yuan Dynasty substantially improved the Juyongguan Pass’s defence system. After expanding it three times, the Ming Dynasty pushed the pass’s development to a new height, making it a critical military city along the Great Wall. At that time, the city at the Juyongguan Pass accommodated a sizeable military supply depot and a garrison. Simultaneously, it also saw its commerce, economy, and culture develop considerably. The late Qing Dynasty abandoned the Juyongguan Guancheng. But the majestic buildings and many historical relics serve as a show-case window to understand ancient Chinese military culture. The existing Guancheng was preserved after several renovation projects based on the Ming Dynasty’s rebuilding effort. The Chinese

government announced the listing of the pass’s Cloud Platform as a national-level scenic spot as early as 1961. The UNESCO listed it as the world’s cultural heritage in 1987. In a renewed effort to protect cultural remains, the Ming Tombs Special Zone Office of Changping County had the Guancheng thoroughly renovated in 1992. The facelift revealed its original majesty.

According to *Shiji (The Records of the Grand Historian)*, the construction of the Badaling section of the Great Wall can be traced back to the Warring States Period. It was built in the 7th year of Taiping Zhenjun of the Northern Wei Dynasty (446 CE) and the 6th year of Tianbao of the Northern Qi Dynasty (555 CE). In the 18th year of Hongzhi (1505 CE) of the Ming Dynasty rebuilt the Badaling section of the Great Wall for over 80 years, and it extended a total of over 650 kilometre. Since ancient times, Badaling had been the central traffic hub and defence outpost for entering Beijing from Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, and Zhangjiakou. It was known as “The First Barrier to Defend Beijing.” History tells us that the northern nomads invaded the south many times, trying to enter the small plains of Beijing through Guangou. But Badaling rendered them helpless each time. When the Ming Dynasty established the *qianhu* units, battalions each comprising a thousand households, Badaling became the front position for the thousand-household battalions, which were under the jurisdiction of the Regional Military Commission of Beiping (present-day Beijing). The troops stationed here later were successively placed under the command of Jizhouzhen and Changpingzhen, two of the nine garrison towns around the Great Wall in Beijing. Badaling was the most dangerously inaccessible pass of the Great Wall built in the Ming Dynasty. It epitomised the sturdiness, majesty, and dangerous inaccessibility of the



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2021)

Great Wall in Beijing and represented the level of technology applied in building the Ming Great Wall. Badaling is the earliest section of the Ming Great Wall developed for tourism. In 1953, the Guancheng and part of its wall were restored and opened as a tourist area. In 1986, the Badaling Great Wall was named one of the “New 16 Scenic Spots in Beijing” and ranked first among the “Top Ten Scenic Spots in China.” It won first place in the “Beijing Tourism World” competition in 1992. The Badaling section of the Great Wall has attracted countless tourists and scholars from home and

abroad because, in addition to its architectural magnificence and geographic and natural environs, the deep-seated Chinese civilisation is the source of its unique charm. The Chinese traditional culture favours the philosophy of “being a gentleman first before being a warrior.” It advocates peaceful negotiation to resolve conflicts. The Badaling section of the Great Wall embodies the Chinese military concept and thought of “not acting before conducting peaceful talks” and “not going into war unless in peril.”

A History Record of Stone and a Score of “Solidified Music”

Chinese architectural art is all-encompassing: the Jiangnan gardens look like delicate ink-and-water-colour paintings, the cave dwellings (*yaodong*) in northern China’s Loess Plateau appear like rhythmic and forceful music notes, the Great Wall seems majestic, and the 22 heritage sites of “the Largest Port in the East” in Quanzhou suggest prosperity – all of which reflect China’s profound culture built up over thousands of years. They also demonstrate the unique customs of the East. From an aesthetic point of view, China’s Great Wall can be called a great work of art, a symbol of the spirit and aesthetic ideals of the Chinese Nation. Because of this rich aesthetic tradition, some designs initially meant for practical purposes have often evolved into ingenious artistic concepts today.¹ The Great Wall can reflect that the people who built it at that time also had a very high level of

aesthetic pursuit while considering about its practicality. The neatly laid out, smooth stone wall lines of the Great Wall and the square, round, and polygonal battlements all have high aesthetic value in themselves. The gate towers, in particular, show more of their artistic originality. The number of floors and height of the gate towers, their architectural design, and the horizontal plaque hanging on them – all harmonise with the entire city, appearing as majestic as spectacular.

A building is called a history book of stone or a score of “solidified music.” China has nurtured a splendid architectural civilisation as one of the four ancient civilisations with a long history and cultural tradition. Traditional Chinese architecture is famous for its rigorously planned layout, the time-space concept of harmony between man and nature, and the world view of valuing lives

¹ Yang Xin and Zhang Qiqun. An Aesthetic Thinking on the Great Wall [J]. *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy & Social Sciences)*, 1996(2).

and rituals. From the square or round shallow cave houses excavated from the Banpo site in Shaanxi with a history of six to seven thousand years to China's Great Wall winding thousands of miles on top of lofty mountains, they are all wonders in the history of human architecture. All reflect the unique aesthetic characteristics of ancient Chinese architecture.

The magnificent architectural form of China's Great Wall is the most intuitive medium for us to help understand its beauty. Westerners call it "the Great Wall," but because of the diversity of its spatial form and the complex process of its formation, the Great Wall, a towering and undulating "high wall," has sophisticated architectural shapes, which are various and countless. The Great Wall was a giant military defence project consisting of continuous walls and supporting passes, bastions, and beacon towers in ancient China.¹

From the perspective of the military defence functions of the Great Wall, its facilities had three functions: defending the homeland against the enemy, transmitting information, and moving and supplying troops. The wall is the basic structure. Lookout towers were built on the wall or on one side to look out for enemy activities, station troops, and engage the enemies in battle. Beacon towers were built along the borders, on the ridges, and by the roadsides to sound the alarm. Passes were set up at the main traffic roads to defend the homeland against enemy infiltration and

facilitate traffic. Bastions were built near some of the passes to station troops to guard them.² In addition, there were some border cities in the military equipment supply system of the Great Wall. They had similar functions vis-a-vis the passes and bastions. Usually larger in scale and stationed with troops headed by higher-level generals, they played the role of commanding the passes and bastions and defence areas.³ Structurally, the facilities of China's Great Wall fall into four types: the walls, the passes and bastions, the beacon towers, and other related buildings (see Table 1-2-1).⁴

The wall is a linear fortification that integrates the functions of blocking, defending, and sheltering and is the central part of the Great Wall's military defence system. The wall of the Great Wall is similar to China's ancient city walls in terms of architectural function, construction methods, and form. People in the Ming Dynasty called the Great Wall *bianqiang* (border wall).⁵ Therefore, the "Border Wall" is another name for the Great Wall used by some people in history and even today. The material, size, and structure of the wall vary in different sections.

Passes are called *guan'ai*, *guankou*, or *guanzhai*. Each has a walled city stationed with troops. A pass is also known in Chinese as a *kou* (opening).⁶ A pass constructed with the Great Wall cannot be understood as simply a checkpoint or a bastion. Instead, it acted as a management centre based on the pass, guarding

1 Dong Yaohui and Jia Huiming. "Overview: Records of Important Events," *Chronicles of the Great Wall* [M]. Nanjing: Phoenix Science Press, 2016.

2 Tang Yuyang. "Architectural Structures," *Chronicles of the Great Wall* [M]. Nanjing: Phoenix Science Press, 2016.

3 Zhang Yukun. *Chronicles of the Great Wall: Border Towns, Bastions and Passes* [M]. Nanjing: Phoenix Science Press, 2016.

4 National Cultural Heritage Administration. Standards for the Use of Names in the Survey of the Great Wall Resources [EB/OL]. (2017-05-22). http://www.ncha.gov.cn/art/2017/5/22/art_2318_43428.html.

5 Tang Yuyang. "Architectural Structures," *Chronicles of the Great Wall* [M]. Nanjing: Phoenix Science Press, 2016.

6 National Cultural Heritage Administration. Standards for the Use of Names in the Survey of the Great Wall Resources [EB/OL]. (2017-05-22). http://www.ncha.gov.cn/art/2017/5/22/art_2318_43428.html.



The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2021)

the walls and other military facilities such as the lookout towers, beacon towers, and bastions in a specific area along the Great Wall, thus guaranteeing smooth commercial transactions.

Bastions are known to the Chinese as *chengbao* (castle), *chengzhang* (city barrier), *zhangcheng* (barrier city), *zhencheng* (military city), *zhangsai* (barrier and blockade), *zhai* (stockade), *shubao* (garrison bastion), *bianbao* (border bastion), *junbao* (military bastion), *tunbao* (stationing bastion), and *minbao* (civilian bastion). The Standards for the Use of Names in the Survey of the Great Wall Resources classifies such pass bastions into 22 categories, including bastion walls, moats, wall gates, gate towers, and corner towers.

Beacon towers are high platforms along the Great Wall where sentries used to ignite a fire to create smoke to convey critical information as to observed enemy activities. A beacon tower is an integral part of the Great

Wall's fortifications, and it is mainly built on places of strategic importance along the Great Wall or on top of the mountains with a broad, far reaching views. The Chinese also call the beacon tower *duntai* (mound platform), *fenghou* (beacon mound), *yandun* (smoke mound), and *langyantai* (a platform of smoke created with wolves' dung).

From an aesthetic point of view, China's Great Wall is different from other ancient buildings such as pavilions, terraces, and towers. First of all, even though it had such "decorative" elements as Guancheng and beacon towers and the wall itself had unique aesthetic features, the Great Wall was primarily practical. Its function of defending the homeland against enemies was self-evident. Secondly, the Chinese name for the Great Wall is Changcheng, meaning "Long City." But it is a "city" far from the notion of culturally rich cities. Therefore, when we appreciate

Table 1-2-1 Facilities of China's Great Wall in Terms of Its Structure¹

Categories	Standardised Names	Other Names	Description
The Wall	<i>duokou</i> (battlements)	<i>nūkou, zhīdie, duokouqiang</i>	A low wall on the top of the Great Wall with crenels and merlons
	<i>leishikong</i> (stone missile holes)	<i>leishikou</i>	Holes in the wall used to catapult logs and stones
	<i>liaowangkong</i> (lookout holes)	<i>wangkong</i>	Small holes, generally beneath the battlements, used for observing enemy activities
	<i>shekong</i> (shooting holes)		Small holes for shooting at enemy troops
	<i>nūqiang</i> (parapets)	<i>yuqiang, nū'erqiang, pini (ni), nūtouqiang</i>	Low walls on top of the Great Wall, usually built on the inside
	Drainage facilities		Drainage ditches and outlets built on the inner side of the Great Wall to drain the accumulated water on the top surface of the wall
	<i>zhangqiang</i> (transverse walls)		Short walls built on the Great Wall for lateral defence to prevent the defenders from being exposed to the enemy's sight and coming into range
	<i>madao</i> (horse pathways)		Roads inside the wall for people and horses to pass
	<i>dengcheng</i>		Stairs for soldiers to go up and down
	<i>budao</i> (wall-ascending footpaths)		The wall
	<i>ditai</i> (battlements)	<i>dilou, duntai</i>	High platforms protruding from the Great Wall in two types: hollow and solid
	<i>mamian</i> (horse-face embattlements)	<i>chengduo, qiangtai, qiangduo</i>	Platforms attached to the outside of the wall and have the same height as the latter
	<i>pushe</i> (shacks)	<i>loulou, pufang</i>	Shelters built on the Great Wall or battlements, shielding patrolling guards from wind and rain. They are also places for guards to rest and store military supplies
	<i>wengcheng</i> (barbican)	<i>yuecheng</i>	Enclosures built outside the gates of the Great Wall for reinforcement purposes
	<i>chengmen</i> (city gates)		Passages opened in the walls of the Great Wall
	<i>shuimen</i> (drainage openings)	<i>shuidou, shuiguan</i>	Drainage facilities opened in the walls

1 State Administration of Cultural Heritage and National Administration of Surveying, Mapping, and Geoinformation. Workbook on Surveying the Great Wall Resources [EB/OL]. (2007-01-22). http://www.ncha.gov.cn/art/2007/5/22/art_2318_43428.html.

Categories	Standardised Names	Other Names	Description
The Wall	<i>anmen</i> (hidden doors)	<i>bianmen</i>	Small doors opened in the walls from inside and outside for passage
	<i>chenglou</i> (wall gate towers)	<i>menlou, zhanpeng, louzi, dituan, dielou</i>	Buildings on the Great Wall for looking out and shooting the enemy
	<i>Others</i>		Other facilities built on the Great Wall
Pass Bastions	<i>baoqiang</i> (bastion walls)		Walls surrounding the bastions with defensive facilities built on them
	<i>huchenghe</i> (moat)		Artificial water course dug around a pass bastion as an extra defence
	<i>chengmen</i> (wall gates)		Passage opened in the wall of the Great Wall for traffic in peacetime and for the entry and exit of troops to attack the enemy in wartime
	<i>chenglou</i> (wall gate towers)	<i>menlou, zhanpeng, louzi, dituan, dielou</i>	Buildings on the wall of the Great Wall: built of bricks, timber, and mixture of brick and wood. Their main functions are to watch and shoot enemy troops at a close range
	<i>jiaolou</i> (corner towers)		Towers built at the corner of the walls of the Great Wall for looking out and shooting the enemy
	<i>mamian</i> (horse-face embattlements)	<i>chengduo, qiangtai, qiangduo</i>	High platforms protruding from the walls of the Great Wall: two types: hollow and solid
	<i>wengcheng</i> (barbicans)	<i>yuecheng</i>	Enclosures built outside the gates of the Great Wall for reinforcement. purposes
	<i>luocheng</i> (outer city)	<i>waicheng</i>	Enclosures built outside the walls
	<i>cangchu</i> (warehouses)	<i>cangkū, canglin, liangcaocang, shenjiku</i>	Warehouses for storing grain, fodder, and other items
	<i>yashu</i> (government offices)	<i>guanshu, gongxie</i>	Places where officials guarding the Great Wall handled official affairs
	<i>bingying</i> (barracks)		Barracks where stationing soldiers lived
	<i>loutai</i> (towers)		Buildings in the pass bastions, such as bell and drum towers, theatrical stages, and platforms on which commanders appointed officials
	<i>qiaohan</i> (bridges and culverts)		Bridges and culverts in pass bastions
	Wells		Water wells in bastions for life and production
	<i>jiedao</i> (streets)		Passages for pedestrians and horses in pass bastions
	<i>minju</i> (civilian residences)		Typical traditional houses for residents in pass bastions

Categories	Standardised Names	Other Names	Description
Pass Bastions	<i>dianpu</i> (stores)	<i>shangpu</i>	Places for commodity trading activities
	<i>xiangxue</i> (schools)	<i>ruxue</i>	Places where children are taught
	<i>pailou</i> (monumental gateway)	<i>paifang, fangbiao</i>	An architectural structure built to commend or commemorate people or to point the way or mark a landmark, such as memorial archways and ornamental columns in front of palaces or tombs
	<i>zuofang</i> (workshops)		Places where craftsmen made or repaired things
	<i>miaoyu</i> (temples)		Houses of religious worship or ancestral halls
	<i>Others</i>		Other facilities in pass bastions
Beacon Towers	<i>duokou</i> (battlements)	<i>nükou, zhidie,</i>	A low wall on the top of the Great Wall with crenels and merlons
	<i>pushe</i> (shacks)	<i>loulou</i>	Shelters built on the Great Wall or battlements, shielding patrolling guards from wind and rain. They are also places for guards to rest and store military supplies
	<i>shekong</i> (shooting holes)	<i>shekou</i>	Small holes for shooting arrows to attack enemy troops
	<i>liaowangkong</i> (lookout holes)	<i>wangkong</i>	Openings beneath the battlements, used for observing enemy activities
	<i>paishuikong</i> (drainage outlets)	<i>paishuizui</i>	Drainage outlets extending out of the wall to connect with the drainage ditches
	<i>jieti</i> (stairs)		Passages built to ascend the top of the beacon towers. They could be moveable ladders
	<i>weiqiang</i> (enclosing walls)	<i>dunyuan</i>	Walls enclosing beacon towers
	Living facilities		Facilities such as warehouses, residences, stables, and water wells
	Alarm facilities		Collected firewood and smoke stoves
	<i>Others</i>		Other facilities related to beacon towers

the beauty of the Great Wall, we can hardly separate it from the natural environment in which it is located. Besides, the “beauty” of the Great Wall is, to a large extent, a constituent element of the surrounding natural landscape, which carries a strong characteristic of “Nature.” As far as the architectural style is

plain, the Great Wall is very sturdy and yet simple. Although not exquisitely designed like other large-scale architectural structures, the Great Wall is still rich in its multi-layered aesthetic connotations. These particular characteristics have had a tremendous impact on the artistic quality of Beijing.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2016)

Rhythmic Notes Drifting 5,000 Kilometres

The beauty of the Great Wall also lies in the sense of movement of its walls. There is a whole palette of facilities on the Great Wall, including battlements, stone-missile holes, lookout holes, shooting holes, parapets, drainage facilities, transverse walls, horse pathways, wall-ascending footpaths, lookout towers, horse-face embattlements, lean-to shacks, outer cities, wall gates, drainage openings, hidden doors, city-gate towers, and others. They form a defence system on the wall and on either side of it. The survey data released by the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau in 2009 enumerates 1,480 lookout towers, 43 horse-face embattlements, 52 moat gates, six lean-to shacks, and four other stand-alone structures.

Ongoing construction and repair caused the shape of the Great Wall to become increasingly varied, thereby giving it the beauty of movement in its overall layout. The Great Wall boasts 898 passes and towers, having on average one structure higher than

the wall every 700 metres, making viewing the Great Wall enjoyable. The passes and the wall sections alternate on the rolling mountains like the major intervals and rests on a music staff. They also look like the level and oblique tones in a line of poem. The Great Wall seems unadorned but by no means monotonous.

The principal part of the Great Wall defence system is the wall. There are eight types of walls: earth, stones, bricks, wooden shield wall, precipice wall, natural cliff barriers, and natural river barriers. Because the northern part of Beijing is mountainous and rocky, the walls of the Beijing section of the Great Wall are mainly built of stones, with the surfaces paved with bluestone, stone slabs, or rubble to reinforce their sturdiness and durability in time. For defensive purposes, the walls are constructed according to the topographical conditions, usually along dangerous ridges or inaccessible level ground. The structure is very complex. The walls built on the plains are solid, while those constructed on precipitous mountains are relatively low and narrow. Where the cliffs are too steep and make it impossible to build walls, the original or carved



The Kylin Screen Wall (2021)

mountainside terrains are used in place of walls. For example, the Simatai section of the Great Wall in Miyun District of Beijing branches into the east and the west. The east wall is built on a ridge as sharp as a blade. In a span of only 2.7 kilometres, it soars suddenly from 295 metres to 986 metres into the clouds. A notable feature of the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall in Huairou District, Beijing, is that both sides of the wall have sizable embattlements protruding outward to fend off enemies on both sides. The Badaling section of the Great Wall appears majestic, with an average wall height of seven to eight metres. The height can reach ten metres where the terrain slope is relatively gentle.¹

There is a battlement protruding from the Great Wall in short intervals to defend

against the enemy siege-laying. The neat and smooth wall lines of the Great Wall plus the battlements of various shapes: square, round, and polygonal all are of high aesthetic value. “The battlements are set up to house soldiers and store provisions, fodder, and weapons. Without battlements, the Great Wall would just have been an unguarded stone wall. Today, they have become wonderful sights on the Great Wall. Like the nodes on a plant’s stalk to make its life more vivid, the battlements reveal the inner rhythmic movement. If the Great Wall is compared to a masterpiece of handwriting, the battlements would be what gives the strokes rhythm and life.”²

The battlements on the Great Wall in Beijing are concentrated and varied in shapes. For example, the section of the Great Wall at

1 The Great Wall Museum of China. *The History and Culture of the Great Wall in Beijing* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Education Publishing House, 2018.

2 Yang Xin and Zhang Qiqun. An Aesthetic Thinking on the Great Wall [J]. *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy & Social Sciences)*, 1996 (2).

Simatai. The roofs of the battlements alone have six configurations, including flat, domed and octagonal. The walls also display seven forms: some on one side, some on both, battlement wall, some single-sided, some double-sided, and some trapezoid-shaped. In terms of their structures, there are two-layered, three-layered, round, L-shaped, two-holed, three-holed, four-holed, six-holed, and 24-holed. The craftsmen built the battlements with various structural shapes by combining the actual geographical environment and ancient Chinese aesthetic tastes.

The battlements of the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall are noted for their “strategic position, inaccessible location, unexpected features, ingenious design, and complete supporting facilities.” They are as concentrated as varied in structural shapes. Seen from above, they appear square, rectangular, and T-shaped. Vertically, they are either be two-storied or three-storied. The materials used are bricks and stones, bricks and wood, or bricks and stones combined with bricks and wood. Viewed from inside the battlements, their ceilings are arched, winding-corridor-shaped, domed, beamless, and crossed. The shacks on the battlements fall into two kinds: enclosed and unenclosed. The roofs of the shacks can be hip-and-gabled, gabled, and tented.

The combination of hollow and solid battlements on the Great Wall in Huairou District is extremely rare. Of the three battlements on the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall, one is hollow and the other two solid. As they stand side by side, the locals called them “Three Towers.” Located at the junction of Huairou and Yanqing districts, Jiuyanlou (Nine Eyes Tower) is the most

sizable and characteristic of its kind on the Great Wall. It is square and two-storied and was named after the nine holes on each side of its walls. It is the connection point of the three critical military towns: Changpingzhen, Jizhouzhen, and Xuanfuzhen. It is also the so-called “Beijing Node,” where the inner and outer lines of the Great Wall converge.

Controlling Strategic Locations to Defend the Country

Every Great Wall pass had a Guancheng. Usually built on vital transport routes or in mountain gorges, Guancheng was a walled enclosure connected with the Great Wall. Most of the Guancheng strongholds were situated according to the terrain of the passes and their defence needs. The number of city gates varied with the size of the cities: large ones had four while small ones had two only. City gates were supposed to be opened and closed to facilitate the free passage of pedestrians and business travellers. In wartime, the sturdy gates would be tightly-closed so that minimum troops were required to defend against the enemies. Thus, a famous saying went, “If one man guards the pass, ten thousand men are unable to get through.”¹

Rich in mountains and waters and complex in terrain, Beijing provides unique conditions for establishing passes. The principal passes on the Great Wall in Beijing number more than 50, of which 40% are located in Miyun District.² The Juyongguan section of the Great Wall, constructed under the supervision of the Ming general Xu Da, is typical of controlling a strategic location with the help of a col. The Taihang and the

1 Ibid.

2 Beijing Local Chronicle Compilation Committee. *Beijing Chronicles: World Cultural Heritage — Chronicles of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2008.

Jundu mountains in Juyongguan are incredibly steep, making themselves a natural barrier to safeguard Beijing. The col between the precipitous mountainsides has popularly been known as the “pass trench.” With lush vegetation and meandering streams, the location also has the name “Juyongguan of Layered Green.” It is one of the “Eight Great Scenic Spots of Beijing.” The col is deep and twisty, with dangerous geographical features lurking everywhere. The narrowest part is accessible to one horse-drawn carriage, while the widest part can accommodate a pass with a garrison. The entire “pass trench” could be either a thoroughfare or a blind alley. It could be used as the southern gate of Beijing and the northern gate of south China. The fortification at the mountain pass took a unique form: a Guancheng consisting of battlements and beacon towers to monitor and safeguard the pass area. In addition, the strongholds of Shangguancheng, Baiyangcheng, Changyucheng, and Shixiayukou administered by the Juyong Lu also controlled the traffic arteries in the area.

The design and construction of the Guancheng strongholds of the Great Wall show unique artistic ingenuity. For example, the Juyongguan Guancheng is closed and circular, with a circumference of over 4,000 metres. The northward and southward outer cities, battlements, and other supporting facilities complete the defence system. The Guancheng is also home to government offices, temples, and schools.¹ The Mutianyu Guancheng comprises a principal platform with a subsidiary one on either side. Sitting right in the middle of the valley, it was a critical passage to Beijing and the intersection of the primary and branch walls

of the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall. Therefore, with such an important geographical location, a more fortified pass was constructed to safeguard the surrounding defence areas of the Great Wall. The Badaling Guancheng has two gates, one in the east and the other in the west. The gatepost foundations are placed upon ten layers of granite slabs. The upper part of the gate is laid with large-size bricks and measures over 20 metres wide, 7.8 metres high, and 17 metres thick. Above each gateway is an arch of bricks and stone of 3.9 metres wide and 5.06 metres high. Building gateways with such a large span must have required superb construction technology at the time.²

Other passes built at the mouths of mountains traversed by the Great Wall in Beijing include those in Pinggu District, which has four: Zhenluoying, Zhangzuoli, Huiyukouzhai, and Yuzishanzhai; Miyin District, which boasts 50, represented by Huiyukou, Xiaotaierzhai and Erdaokou; Huairou District, which has 18, including Shentangyukou and Mutianyuguan; Changping and Yanqing districts sharing 20, such as Menjiayu and Deshengkou; and Mentougou District enjoys 10 in its west; among which are Xiaolongmenkou and Hongshuikou.

Not all the passes of the Great Wall in Beijing perch at the mouths of mountains to defend them. A small number are on mountaintops, where the garrisons could look afar to observe enemy activities by taking advantage of the commanding points. The Mutianyu Pass sits on the apex of the mountain nicknamed “Knife-handle Tower,” and the pass of the Huanghuacheng section of the Great Wall also rests on the mountaintop, both at strategically inaccessible locations. The Ming

1 The Great Wall Museum of China. *The History and Culture of the Great Wall in Beijing* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Education Publishing House, 2018.

2 Ibid.



The Chenjiapu section of the Great Wall (2021)

general Cai Kai had that part of the Great Wall built outside lofty mountains so that the section of the Great Wall formed an “inverted-V” there.

The passes set at mountain openings are known as dry passes, whereas those established at estuaries are water passes. The latter constitute a unique form of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. Water passes are formed by integrating their design and construction with rivers, lakes, swamps, or seas. Large bodies of water facilitate transport. Water passes are essential to defend and control the main waterways for defensive purposes. Besides, they are indispensable in maintaining orderly foreign trade and tax collection. The Great Wall of Beijing has many water passes by the rivers, such as the Huangsongyuguan and Beishuiyuguan water passes in Pinggu District; the Qiangzilingguan and Huangmenkou water passes in Miyun District, the Dashuiyukou, Hefangkou water passes in Huairou District.

The Dual Functions of Bastions: Defence and Farming

The *chengbao* (literally “city fort”), meaning “bastion,” is an architectural structure in traditional Chinese fortified settlements. The word “*bao*” (fort) embodies the concept of defence in traditional Chinese culture. The difference between a bastion and a pass is that the former is detached from the Great Wall. It generally refers to a place of defence and residence built with an enclosure like a city. It is a place of defence and residence, where residents farm as well. It is an integral part of the Great Wall defence system.

All bastions are composed of walls and gates. In plan, a bastion is usually square, but the shape can be adjusted according to the terrain, thus giving rise to bastions of various forms. As the landforms of the areas where the Great Wall in Beijing passes through vary, the bastions’ shapes change accordingly. Those built on the plain ground have level tops, those

on the gently elevated ground have wavy tops, and those on steep slopes have their tops constructed in a stair shape on both sides as they rise and fall with the hill.

There are two types of bastions along the Great Wall in Beijing: military and civilian. Military bastions are barracks for garrisons. They are usually built near points of strategic military importance such as fortified passes on gentle slopes in river valleys on the inner side of the Great Wall. They provide essential military reserves for the Great Wall defence system. According to military functions, military bastions are divided into the levels of *zhengcheng*, *weicheng*, *lucheng*, *suocheng*, and *baocheng*. In terms of their shapes, they fall into *baolei*, *baozhai*, *baobi*, and *baoju*. Civilian bastions, on the other hand, are built to avoid war. Their locations are generally flat, suitable for farming. They can be set up anywhere near the Great Wall as long as they can meet the residents' needs for living.

Take the bastions along the Great Wall in Miyun and Yanqing districts of Beijing, for example. The bastions take various shapes: square, rectangular, and polygonal. No bastion is of the same shape and size. The height of the bastion walls undulates with the terrain of the particular location. With many beacon towers around it, the Huajiayao Bastion in Yanqing District must have been military in purpose. Built on a valley plain along the Great Wall, it was conducive to farming. Some bastions took advantage of strategic high ground for defence purposes while choosing to sit on flat mountaintops to meet the needs for stationing troops and repairing the Great Wall. The Dongbeiying City Bastion was constructed on the gently elevated mountaintops to achieve the dual purpose of defence and farming. Some bastions were used only as horse stables and thus of less military significance. Military bastions like those and most civilian bastions

were set up on the plains where the soil was fertile and water supply was sufficient. The Maying City Bastion in Yanqing District, for instance, was one of a garrison and stable. Lying on the alluvial plain, it was suitable for the soldiers and civilians to make a living from farming.

The Burning of Wolves' Dung and Beacon Fires

There was a time when beacon fires were lit almost every day. Today, it is quiet but still majestic. The beacon fire used to be called *fengsui*. “*Feng*” means smoke that rose during the day, whereas “*sui*” indicates the fire lit at night. *Fengsui* was used as a military early warning system for defence even during the Shang (1600–1046 BCE) and Zhou (1046–256 BCE) dynasties. In the era of cold weapons, to warn against the coming enemies, smoke was produced during the day, and fire was set at night. The smoke or fire would be relayed from one beacon tower to another to transmit information about the enemy activities. Not until the Ming Dynasty was *fengsui* officially named *fenghuotai* (beacon tower). It is said that the ancient border guards would light wolf dung on beacon towers to release smoke to warn the others about the enemy activities. Duan Chengshi, a Chinese poet and writer of the Tang Dynasty, wrote in the “Mao Chapter” of his *Youyang Zaju* (*Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*), “The smoke created with wolves' dung rise straight up, therefore, it is suitable for military use as beacon fire.” That's why ancient border guards burned wolves' dung to give the alarm. According to “The 12th Year of the Tianfu Era of Emperor Gaozu of the Later Han Dynasty,” *Zizhi Tongjian* (*Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*), “The Qidan people (Khitans) burned wolves' dung in towns and cities to



The beacon tower (2021)

create a hundred or more beacon fire sites.” Hu Saxing, a 13th century Chinese historian, said in an annotation to a book titled *Piya* (*Increased Erya*) by Lu Dian, an 11-century scholar-official, “The ancients used wolves’ dung to create smoke, which rises straight up without dispersing. Even the wind could not bend it.” Incidentally, the wolf was also a totem of the ancient Xiongnu, Tujue, and Tubo minority tribes. The Han Chinese nicknamed leaders of those tribes “wolf chiefs” and their troops “wolf soldiers.” And the ancient Han people referred to the beacon signals ignited when these ethnic groups invaded the Central Plains as “wolf smoke.”

Beacon towers are generally independent buildings constructed according to local conditions. They are built with compacted earth, stone, or bricks. Some towers are built with compacted earth clad with brick siding. Roughly square or round, the shapes of beacon towers changed from time to time and place to place. Beacon towers were built near almost all the military hubs along the Great Wall of Beijing to strengthen the defence system. Mostly built on strategic mountaintops with a better view to observe enemy activities and relay the information more quickly and accurately, the towers are conveniently distanced from each other, usually between mountaintops. In the relatively flat and open areas along the Great Wall, the beacon towers are concentrated to ensure that they are in sight of each other. The distance between some beacon towers is only two to three metres. There are dozens of beacon towers lined up at intervals of 50 metres where the mountains and the basins meet outside the Badaling Pass.

There are also beacon towers between the Great Wall and passes, towns, counties, and prefectures. Their functions are to organise counter-attack operations and strengthen defence works. There are many bastions on the Great Wall in Beijing, and beacon towers are more common around the bastions. Take the Yingcheng bastion northeast of Chadao City in Yanqing District, for example. It is located along a compacted-earth section of the Great Wall in Beijing, surrounded by mountains. It had eight beacon towers in its vicinity, and five of them are basically along the Great Wall. The other three were further away. Concentrated in a line, they form a tight warning-signal-relaying system together to ensure that the warnings are transmitted to the other passes and bastions in the surrounding areas as soon as possible. Besides fire and smoke, the beacon towers of the Ming Dynasty also used bombs and added sulphur and nitre to help ignite the fire to release the smoke and keep it going for a longer time. There were also strict regulations on the number of bombs according to the number of enemy troops: one smoke site and one bomb for 100 soldiers, two smoke sites with two bombs for 500 soldiers, three smoke sites with three bombs for 1,000 soldiers, four smoke sites with four bombs for 5,000 soldiers, and five smoke sites with five bombs for 10,000 soldiers. Relaying the smoke signal from one beacon tower to another this way would enable the remote command centre to know the number of enemy troops so that the commanders could move their forces accordingly. As a result, the beacon towers of the Ming Dynasty combined human vision and hearing to convey military information.¹

1 Yang Zong and Wen Zhihong, *The Chinese Culture Book Series: The Great Wall* [M]. Nanchang: Bai Hua Zhou Literature and Art Publishing House, 2012.

The Untold Beauty of Art

China's Great Wall is both strong and beautiful. Many materials and methods for building it are still in use today. While the Great Wall was built with function as the priority, the craftsmen also made ingenious efforts to decorate the Great Wall. The craftsmanship adopted must be that an artisan forget himself as a craftsman and the object of his craftsmanship. His work of art, crafted bit by bit, is so extraordinary that no one else can accomplish it. The product elicits various aesthetic responses from different viewers year after year. But it must embody humanity's universal and simple pursuit of beauty.

A Single Image is Integrated into a Group Sequence

Architecture is not only a technology but also an art. Architectural art is an art composed of space and entities. It embodies the laws of formal beauty and gives people a sense of aesthetic enjoyment through vision. Ancient

Chinese architecture grew and developed in the soil of ancient Chinese traditional Chinese culture and thereby comprises superb technology and exquisite art. It is characteristic of being simultaneously scientific, applicable, artistic, and cultural.

Ancient Chinese architecture evolved based on the Chinese economy, handicraft industry, and science and technology. Construction and modelling technologies reached a high level. A distinctive feature of ancient Chinese architecture is that the single image is integrated into the group sequence. Ancient China architectural structures are relatively simple and mainly of a stereotyped style when standing alone. They do not constitute a complete artistic image until they form a group sequence.

Ancient Chinese architects attached great importance to the overall management of the environment. Such concept emerged in the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. When building cities, ancient Chinese

architects emphasised the relationship between architectural structures and their natural environment and focused on the integrity of the cities *per se* and their surroundings. Other architectural systems primarily contrast artificiality with naturalness. Unlike them, ancient Chinese architecture is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition of synergising architectural structures with Nature. More attention is paid to embed them in the natural environs as if they were part of the organic whole of Mother Nature.

The unity of construction technology and the artistic image is also the principle of ancient Chinese architecture. To a large extent, ancient Chinese architecture is a kind of beauty of shape and structure. After a long period of hard work, ancient Chinese architects created a wealth of rich and colourful artistic images and formed many unique characteristics in this respect by learning from other traditional Chinese arts, especially from painting, sculptures and industrial arts. Examples are decorative roofs and accessory structures. Artistic inspiration encourages technological skills, whereas the latter further inspires artistic fantasy. The blending of art and technology has given ancient Chinese architecture its cultural character, turning it into a world wonder admired by everyone.

The aesthetic aspiration pursued by ancient Chinese architects through honing their skills is vividly reflected in the colossal project of the Great Wall. Technology and art to the Great Wall are like the two wheels of a cart or the two wings of a bird, just as a famous couplet describes, “An object can look as calm as the waveless water surface in autumn, but its quality is as profound as the lush mountain in spring.” Technology makes culture more expressive, turning ordinary places like the common walls into extraordinary spaces and unusual walls so that when people walk on the

Great Wall, they can appreciate the cultural changes and the cycle of life more profoundly. It’s like the case where art may never reject technology, and the exterior of an artefact may need to be meticulously decorated. But the most fantastic internal beauty is to hold values, traditional concepts, and spiritual pursuits to the highest standard to highlight its unique cultural charm in the time and space of Chinese civilisation.

Building the Great Wall, Brick by Brick

The construction of China’s Great Wall was mainly perfected by later dynasties based on the previous ones. Starting from the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, the Great Wall expanded in scale over the past dynasties. During this process, the ancient Chinese artisans continuously improved their architectural craftsmanship and gained experience in building the Great Wall. When building the Great Wall in Beijing, the builders must have taken the surrounding terrain and geographical conditions into account, and the technologies they used was compatible with the Great Wall’s military defence system. The structural and aesthetic characteristics of the Great Wall in Beijing have been formed as a result. Its construction also reflects the level of economic and social development in ancient China.

The building materials used in building the Great Wall are closely related to its geographical environment. Each section of the Great Wall has its own particular characteristics, and the materials used to build the walls include earth, stone, grass, bricks, and others. The Great Wall in Beijing is built on top of rocky mountains, and is integrated with them. Therefore, it is mainly of a masonry structure, and there was a special quarry for its



The Huangyaguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

construction. In the Xiaoshuiyu section of the Great Wall in Miyun District, three artificial wedge-supporting holes are found on the upper part of a boulder south of the No.8 bastion. Each is about ten centimetres long and two to three centimetres wide, and the distance between them is about 13 centimetres. The artificial holes testify to the use of local materials in building the Great Wall. There is also a quarry site in the Donggou section of the Great Wall on a platform 1,000 metres south of Donggou Old Village, Badaling Town, Yanqing District. The quarry is 100 metres away from the pass and has an area of about 150 square metres. It's also one of the quarry sites used for building the Great Wall at that time.

Ruins of many kilns producing Great-Wall-construction bricks have also been discovered in Beijing. The discovery has great historical significance and scientific value for studying the construction history and building

materials of the ancient Great Wall. Bricks were first used in the Ming Dynasty's Great Wall sections and some military fortresses and passes, particularly hollow bastions. The walls made of bricks are better equipped for defence than those made of other materials. The walls of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty are not solid brick walls. Bricks serve only as facing covering walls of compacted earth, rocks, or earth-and-rock mixture. Some of the walls have bricks laid on the top of the earth or rocks to strengthen them. Brick facings can be on one side or on both sides of a wall of rocks.

Dozens of Ming Dynasty's Great Wall brick kilns of various sizes were discovered in Tianxianyu Village, Huairou District. The older people remembered that larger kilns measured four metres high, whereas smaller ones stood three metres high. They had a diameter ranging from two to three metres. The larger kilns could produce 3,000 bricks daily, and the smaller ones, 2,000. In addition,



The Xiangshui Lake Section of the Great Wall (2021)

many wall bricks marked with the years of completion and the producers, *i.e.*, the garrison soldiers, were also found in the area. For example, some bricks are imprinted with “Made by the Shitang Battalion in the Fifth Year of Wanli” and “Made by the Hejian Battalion.” It is speculated that the blue bricks fired here are mainly used to repair the section of the Great Wall from Mutianyu to Jiankou. Two more Great-Wall-related kiln ruin sites were also found at the foot of the Beishan (North Mountain) in Xiangtun Village, Dazhuangke Township, Yanqing District, Beijing. Oval-shaped, the kiln was four metres high and three metres in diameter. This kiln was mainly used to fire bricks for building the section of the Great Wall between Huanghuacheng, Huairou District, and the sharp turn in Dongsancha Yanqing District. The second survey of cultural relics in Miyun District found over 50 Ming Dynasty kiln sites in 16 villages, and each site had seven to a dozen brick kilns. Brick kilns

like the ones in Simatai, Sandaohe Village, Qiangzi Road, and Huayuan Village are mostly round in shape, and there are still fired Great Wall bricks inside them. Besides, a lime kiln was discovered at Qingshuiyan in Baidaoyu Village, West Tiangezhuang Town.

The System of Rotational Troops and the Technology of Construction

No other world ancient construction projects can match the Great Wall in construction time, scale, and difficulty. Neither can they compare with it in terms of its historical and cultural significance. The system of rotational troops came into existence in the process of erecting such a colossal architectural structure. According to the “Military History” chapter of *Mingshi (History of Ming)*, the Ming Dynasty initiated a rotation system during Emperor Yongle’s reign (1403–1424 CE). The military groups worked shifts so as not to delay

agricultural production. The soldiers “return to the barracks after the busy season in farming and go back to help with farm work during busy seasons.” Customarily, the troops from Shandong and Henan near Beijing fell into the spring and autumn rotations. The soldiers of the spring rotation came to the Great Wall construction site in the 3rd lunar month and returned home to farm in the 8th lunar month. The soldiers of the autumn rotation came back in the 9th lunar month to take over the construction task and return home in the 2nd lunar month the following year. This rotational system is known as *banjunzhi* in Chinese.

How were so many bricks and stones for building the Great Wall transported to the ridges of high mountains without mechanical equipment at all? The rotational troops played an essential role in carrying the materials like stones, bricks, lumber, and lime in their arms or on their shoulders. When walking was impossible, they would line up to relay the materials man-to-man and up to the construction site.

While building the Yanhecheng section of the Great Wall in Mentougou District, the local soldiers and civilians used the most primitive methods to heap earth into trapezoid mounds as tall as the height of the Great Wall required. They then piled stones weighing hundred or even thousand *jin* to form the wall of the Great Wall along the river. The entire process took them only a few months. This section of the Great Wall is the only stone one in north China and undoubtedly a great wonder in the history of architecture.

The second transport method involved simple machinery and tools such as handcarts, winches, logs, pulleys, and wheels and axles. Different machinery or tools were used in various geological conditions. For example, handcarts were used on gentle slopes, logs and crowbars were employed to get large pieces

of rock up to the mountaintops, and “flying baskets” hanging from ropeways were used to carry the construction materials over deep valleys and gorges.

The third way of transport was to use draft animals. Many sections of the Great Wall in Beijing were built on strategic, difficult-to-access mountain ridges, inaccessible to people crawling with heavy loads of construction materials like bricks and stones on their backs. A version of the Great Wall construction story tells that the builders of the Badaling section placed construction materials in baskets and loaded them onto the backs of donkeys and goats, good mountain climbers, and drove them up to the mountaintops to solve the dangerous transport problem.

Exquisite craftsmanship results in high-quality architectural structures. As one of the world’s seven wonders, the Great Wall received more attention to architectural craftsmanship than the buildings elsewhere of the same period. It is a combination of such materials as stones, bricks, and earth. According to existent information, the Great Wall in Beijing was largely built of huge bricks bound with lime mortar. However, some other data shows that glutinous rice mortar was already used to bind stones and bricks as early as the Qin Dynasty. In fact, it was a distinctive feature of ancient Chinese buildings to use mortars of lime mixed with viscous organic additives. Such mortar mixtures included lime and glutinous rice, lime and tung (aka China wood) oil, and lime and alum.

Scientific planning, organisation, and division of labour are key to accomplishing such a systematic project as the Great Wall. Many inscribed stone steles survived have crystalised the wisdom of the ancient Chinese people in building this gargantuan Great Wall project in their time. From some of the remaining inscriptions, we know quite a lot.

For example, those in charge of the projects were all senior officials at the governor level, and the Great Wall builders came from all parts of the country. The builders were well organised: they were scientifically managed and had distinct divisions of labour. Besides, the project involved not only the construction of the walls and battlements but also afforestation, wasteland reclamation, and the building of such facilities as barracks, shacks on the battlements, and offices. It's fair to say that the construction of the Great Wall in the past dynasties was massive in scale, and the task was arduous. Therefore, it couldn't be completed with a few people. Both the construction and logistical support required a large amount of labour. Simultaneously, scientific deployment and management of labour were also called for. The human resource organisation and the management thinking and methods regarding the construction of the Great Wall reflect the social and cultural background on which those behaviours and activities relied. They also demonstrate the profound influence of Chinese culture, which has been inherited and carried forward without interruption.

The human resources involved in building the Great Wall came from the army guarding the frontiers; civilian conscripted as conscripted press-gang labourers according to the feudal laws, and criminals enlisted in the army. Therefore, the management method adopted at that time was integrating the construction of the Great Wall with defensive tasks. That meant the tasks were contracted by sections, areas, and districts. For example, the construction of the Great Wall in the prefectures of Wuwei, Zhangye, Jiuquan, and Dunhuang were first contracted to the prefecture governors, who then contracted it to the soldiers guarding their designated areas. With larger projects such as the construction of Guancheng strongholds, prefecture governors had to solicit and mobilise

labourers themselves. The imperial court would also recruit troops and civilians from all over the country to build the Great Wall in key areas. During the Ming Dynasty, 11 important military districts known as “*zhen* (towns)” were established along the Great Wall of China so as to organise the labours to oversee the Great Wall. The labourers also undertook the task of building and repairing the walls.

The Aesthetic Implication in the Cuts

French sculptor Auguste Rodin said, “Beauty is everywhere. It is not that it is lacking to our eye, but our eyes which fail to perceive it.” The Chinese have a saying, “A house is not a house without carvings, which make it more valuable.” Carving is a Chinese folk art. Artisans carve patterns on wood, stones, bricks, and tiles. The carving methods are complex and diverse, and the style is classical and elegant. Carving adds a unique landscape to Chinese architecture.

In the past, some people thought that the Great Wall was just a defensive project without being artistic. It's not the case. Besides its majestic structure, ingenious layout, and its adaptability of its construction to available materials, the Great Wall is also the product of high achievements in decorative arts. Therefore, the Great Wall is not just the product of bricks and stones. It is also a piece of art up to the traditional aesthetic standards of ancient Chinese architecture. Any building with structures repeating themselves without any consideration of culture is by no means a work of art. The Great Wall is full of architectural beauty. Stepping into it, one can feel struck first by the gorgeous bricks and stones exquisitely carved. Together, they constitute a beautiful scene like the traditional Chinese painting scroll, gently presenting the trials and



The Yanhecheng section of the Great Wall (2020)

tribulations witnessed by the Great Wall in the past thousand years or more...

The junction of each parapet and merlon is decorated with water-chest-shaped corner carvings. The shooting slits and stone missile holes are adorned with teapot-shaped designs shaped like Buddhist wall niches. The artisans even didn't neglect the tips and spouts of water-dripping aqueducts, beautifying them with the artistic touch of their carving techniques – the decorative carvings provided with the bored soldiers guarding the frontiers in harsh conditions with some aesthetic enjoyment. On

the eaves of the battlements at the Yanmenguan Pass in Dai County, Xinzhou City and the Deshengkou Pass in Xinrong District, Datong City, Shanxi Province, there are still the remains of festooned-gate-style brick carvings left by the Ming Dynasty artisans. Their beauty matches that of the buildings found in the residences of monarchs or princes. The drainage system of the Great Wall is roughly divided into two parts: the drainage ditch and the water-releasing spout. Built on both sides of the walkway on top of the Great Wall, the drainage ditch is a long and narrow





The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2020)

depression. During rainy days, rainwater flows to the depression along brick pavements and gets discharged out of the Great Wall through water sprouts. Each carved into the shape of an animal's mouth, the embellished sprouts once again show that the ancient Chinese artisans considered the practicality of the Great Wall and attached great importance to its architectural artistry.

With its unique art form, the Great Wall stone carvings have also become the most valuable materialised testimony of the Great Wall culture. There are stone carvings of the Sifang section of the Great Wall in Pinggu, Beijing; on the cliff along the Huairou section of the Great Wall; and on the Wuling Mountain of Miyun that spanned more than 200 years. Complete or broken with blurred inscriptions, these many historical objects have survived hundreds of years of tribulations. The distant past has come close to us today, telling us about the Great Wall's changes in history and its evolution in ancient times. Following these stone inscriptions, we can interpret the dust-covered past and the cultural connotations behind it.

The Great Wall is rich in brilliant Chinese culture and art. In addition to the architectural layout, modelling, carvings, paintings, there are other architectural art presentations of the walls, Guancheng strongholds, military towns, and beacon towers, there are also poetry, versed prose, folk literature, opera, and singing-and-talking literature. According to Georg Hegel, the highest revelation of beauty is poetry, which expresses the mind with ideas instead of tangible objects, thus "placing the finite in the infinite." It's like enjoying the view of a beautiful building or an architectural compound. We are no longer satisfied with the feeling arising from that the shape of the building but enjoy more of the poetic sentiment conveyed to us by the connotation of the building. The Chinese implication of the Great

Wall is deeply hidden in the immortal literature created by many an emperor, frontier soldier and poet throughout the ages.

A Ming poet Li Dongyang wrote a poem about the Great Wall titled "Seeing Coordinator Tang off as He Was Taking His Office in Jizhou."

On the Mountains soaring thousands of feet high, the Great Wall is rolling from Juyongguan to Yu passes. In autumn, we farm as the frontier duty is on standby, the night sees the bastion beacons spew no blazes. Tame are the wild beasts who fear our military order, nightly chilly wind brushes familiar faces each year. I've just tried my hands on state affairs with ardor, after I return, I'll re-assume my post as a courtier.

The verse expresses the static beauty in a peaceful state of mind by depicting the towering mountains on which the Great Wall straddles and the magnificence of the walls from a distance view. It also shows people could live and work in peace and contentment under the Great Wall's protection.

Xu Wei, an idiosyncratic artist and poet, wrote in one of his poems about the frontiers:

Far is the road on the Mountain of Eighteen Bends, the rivers are tumbling to where the world ends. Can a wall of earth and stone along the frontiers divide the great land into territories of two clans.

The first and second lines describe the scenery of the frontiers traversed by the Great Wall and present the profound artistic conception and emotions through highly concise language. The last two lines resort to historical thinking. Looking at the Great Wall, the poet asked questions in the dimension of humanistic value: should the division of China into two parts be the ultimate purpose of the Great Wall? The poet implies his expectations for the country's peaceful reunification into a big family.

The Great Wall in Beijing has various aesthetic forms: both the beauty of simplicity



The Juyongguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

and the beauty of variation. Limited by the terrain, the Great Wall was built on the mountain ridges, thus presenting itself as a continuous linear scene. Zou Ji, a poet of the Ming Dynasty, described in his “Juyongguan of Layered Green” that “A dark blue continues to set off the blue sky.” Xu Wei, Zou’s contemporary and counterpart, wrote in his “Badaling”:

Bada stands on a mountain a hundred feet high. The Great Wall extends to the desert far away. In the sunset, it runs on the mountains lush, and yellow fog enshrouds the battlements grey.

It also describes the simple beauty of the Great Wall.

The Great Wall, which has experienced trials and tribulations, is naturally rich in the beauty of simplicity and profoundness. It’s also full of tragically aesthetic thinking about the past and the present. In his “Juyong Pass of Layered Green,” Xu Minghe chanted that the

Great Wall looks gorgeous as it “Overlooks the misty gorges after spring rains, and lies on lush mountains in the sunset.” Huang Hongxian also sings in his “Shanhaiguan Pass,” “Ancient battlements overlooks the sea, and it defends the capital in a dangerously inaccessible location.” It indicates the Great Wall’s beauty of simplicity and melancholy. The blood and tears of the civilians who built the Great Wall and the bones of the soldiers who died defending it constituted the tragic melody lingering amid the Great Wall’s beacon fire. In his poem titled “Seeing Mr. Chen Out of the Frontier When Watering a Horse in the Morning,” Li Mingshan chants,

Even horses loathe the salty water and grass wilted, those visiting the Great Wall cry themselves crumpled. I wonder who the white bones buried in the walls are. Actually, they were this year’s wall builders.

...

The grass is frosty on both sides of the

wall in autumn. At sunset, nomads' whips can be heard crack at random.

The lines are tragically aesthetic.

Gu Yanwu, a thinker in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, travelled all over North China and investigated the geographical situation outside the Great Wall. During his investigation tour, he composed the "Four Poems Composed in Gubeikou." The last of the four is the best-known. It reads,

*Various flowers grown on Mount Wuling,
the river down is audible off the frontiers.
Unfortunately, we miss our heroic generals, as
we keep building walls of capitulation.*

The first two lines of the poem describe the sad and quiet scene of Gubeikou Pass, whereas the last two lines express the poet's deep feelings by describing the scenes. The whole poem sounds somber, desolate, succinct, and tragically heroic. The poem is filled with the poet's strong sense of responsibility for the rise and fall of the country.

When climbing up the Great Wall, one can feel proudly transcending nature and oneself. For example, a Ming-Dynasty poet named Xie Zhen wrote in his "Juyongguan Pass":

*Controlling the sea and the remote Yan
territory are heroic soldiers with bows and
arrows ready. They graze warhorses in the
mountains in autumn and they go into frontier
battles when it was wintry. On precipitous
cliffs, clouds are flying swiftly. Flying over the
long passes, birds have difficulty. This court
boasts generals known for their bravery to lead
in defence operations here recurrently.*

Expressing the sensation of being on the Great Wall, the poet combined his thought with

the objective structure's magnificence, evoking a feeling of pride and sublimity. He vividly described the sense of transcendence over nature and himself.

Xu Da and Qi Jiguang are two crucial figures in constructing the Great Wall. Though it may be farfetched to emphasise their association with the Beijing culture and the aesthetic style of Great Wall, we can analyze the two important Ming-Dynasty courtiers well versed in literature and military skills from an aesthetic perspective. Dubbed as "the Great Wall" by Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming Dynasty, Xu Da was "tall, stalwart, strong-willed, and dauntless." He was simultaneously "well-versed in Confucian classics and military strategies." After he led his army from Tongzhou Prefecture into Dadu, capital of the Yuan Dynasty in the first year of the Hongwu Era of the Ming Dynasty (1368 CE), he was appointed to preside over the construction of the Great Wall around Beijing. He oversaw the building of the Juyongguan Pass, the most important fort of the Great Wall in Beijing. Qi Jiguang looked unusual in manners at an early age. He was born into a poor family, but loved reading and understood the gist of Confucian classics and historical records. Qi Jiguang started the large-scale reconstruction of the Great Wall from the Shanhaiguan Pass to the Juyongguan Pass from the first year of the Longqing Era of the Ming Dynasty (1567 CE). He played a role in the construction and restoration of Gubeikou, Badaling, Mutianyu, Jinshanling (including Simatai), and Chancheng sections.¹

1 Wang Nan. What Was the Impact of Xu Da's and Qi Jiguang's Involvement in Building the Great Wall on the Aesthetic Aspect of the Ming Great Wall in Beijing? [N]. *Beijing Evening News*, 2018-05-29 (9).

The Great Wall on a Vast Land

A city forms a unique historical and cultural system in the progress of time and a typical regional cultural characteristic in the expansion of space. The development of the city reflects the evolution of social civilisation and human wisdom. Beijing is known as the “incomparable masterpiece” in the history of world cities and the “last fruit” of ancient metropolis construction. World cultural heritage represented by the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Temple of Heaven, and the Summer Palace is the core elements of Beijing’s historical and cultural context. In China, the emergence of cities was marked by the construction of city walls. The capital city and the “Long City” (Chinese for the Great Wall) are dubbed “Dual Cities” in Chinese history. Meandering on the vast land of China, the Great Wall and the cities along it formed a multi-layered defence system and a considerable barrier defending the capital city.

The Capital and the Great Wall Are as Closely Related as Lips and Teeth

Abbreviated as “Jing” and formerly known as “Yanjing,” “Youzhou,” and “Beiping,” Beijing is the capital of the People’s Republic of China. It’s a municipality directly under the Central Government and China’s central city. It’s also the country’s political, cultural, international exchange centre, and an innovation and technology hub. It’s also the seat of the Central Government of the People’s Republic of China. Beijing is one of the four ancient capitals. It has six sites included in the World Cultural Heritage List and ranks first in the world in terms of the number of world cultural heritage sites. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, announced on July 31, 2015, that Beijing would host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games together with Zhangjiakou City. As a result, Beijing will become the first city to stage the both the Olympic Summer and Winter Games.

Beijing is a famous historical and cultural city with a history of more than 3,000 years of construction and over 860 years of being the capital of China. The old town of Beijing is a witness to this long history and splendid civilisation. Its planning and design represent the highest achievement of ancient Chinese city construction. It forms a “” shape with a moat meandering around the inner and outer Great Walls, with the Forbidden City sitting in its centre. The layout of Beijing is fundamentally symmetrical except for a small indenting corner in the northwest. It has a central axis running through it from north to south. Starting from the Bell Tower and Drum Tower in the north, the axis crosses Jingshan Mountain, passes through the Shenwumen Gate, and reaches the three central halls of the Imperial Palace. It then leads out of the Wumen Gate, the Tiananmen gate crosses the Jinshuiqiao Bridge, and goes through the Zhengyangmen and Yongdingmen gates, running 8,000 metres. The layout shows the incomparable close relationship between man and nature, and the architectural complex demonstrates a clear, rational spirit.

Today's Beijing roughly follows the pattern of the city of the Ming Dynasty, which inherited the design of Dadu of the Yuan Dynasty. The city straddles a central axis, featuring a symmetric, gentle, open, rich-contoured, and rhythmically orderly layout that embodies the tradition of Chinese architectural planning and construction. They are characteristic of “square, orderly, composed, and rounded.” “Square” refers to the principle of building a city with a square area of nine *li* (one *li* equals 0.5 kilometres) with three gates on the sides plus a square layout of square buildings. “Order” means neat, well-balanced, and axisymmetric. “Composed” indicates an expansion of individual structures horizontally into a sophisticated and exciting complex. “Rounded” represents the symbols

of the universe and heavenly bodies, such as the Heavenly Temple, the Temple of Earth, the Temple of the Sun, and the Temple of the Moon. Simultaneously, the ancient Chinese architects always followed the principle of “man as the soul of everything in the universe,” striving to integrate realistic ideals of life with artistic tastes. They have thus created a people-centred philosophy of “unity of Man and Nature” and “I regard the Heaven and Earth as my residential building.”

The great architect Liang Sicheng once commented on the layout of Beijing in this way, “Beijing has proved to us how glorious results our Nation has achieved in adapting to, controlling, and changing Nature. A city like this is an unparalleled masterpiece in the world.” The layout and construction of Beijing have also won the admiration of global architects, who call it one of the world's architectural wonders. Therefore, while accelerating modernisation, Beijing pays excellent attention to protecting the historical-cultural relics of an ancient capital. In 1990, the Beijing Municipal People's Government announced the first 25 historical and cultural protection areas. In 1999, the Beijing Municipal People's Government officially issued the Plan for the Protection and Control of Beijing Old City Historical and Cultural Protection Areas, re-delineating the 25 historical and cultural protection areas. It officially defined the range of protection and control. These sub-districts cover the essence of Beijing's old city. The protection of these areas preserves the classic pattern of Beijing's urban structure.

The beauty of Beijing City is embodied in solemnity and elegance. The breathtaking beauty of the Great Wall has laid the foundation for the aesthetic quality of Beijing, thus giving it a majestic atmosphere. The absence of such as winding “city wall” might diminish the pride and self-confidence in the



The Jinshanting section of the Great Wall (Spring of 2020)



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (Summer of 2020)

Chinese psyche where their aesthetic feel of the outstanding capital is concerned. The magnificence and profoundness of Beijing as China's capital would dwindle to some extent in terms of the city's style stemming from its aesthetic creation. In this regard, history has long defined the interdependence of "the capital" and "the wall."

The Capital of the Yan State and the Traces of the Great Wall

Beijing as a city can be traced back 3,000 years. "Ji" was its first well-documented name when it was the capital of the Yan State during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. The Liao (916–1125 CE) and the Nüzhen Jin (1115–1234 CE) dynasties made it their alternate capital, naming it Yanjing (meaning "capital of the former Yan State"). The Nüzhen Jin Dynasty relocated its primary capital to Yanjing after vanquishing the Liao and renamed it Zhongdu (Central Capital). The Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368 CE) turned it into Dadu. After moving to it, Zhu Di, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty, transferred his country's political centre to this place and changed its name to Beijing, which is still in use today. Beijing had always been a military and commercial centre in north China since the Qin and Han dynasties.

Historical records show that the Great Wall was first built in the 7th century BCE. Archaeological evidence proves that it existed at least in the late Spring and Autumn Period and the early Warring States Period in the 5th century BCE. Finding the footprints of Beijing's construction as it evolved into a city in the past 3,000 years can help us further understand the connection between Beijing and the Great Wall and their mutual influence.

Three thousand years ago, Beijing entered the stage of history as a capital for

the first time. King Wu of Zhou established the Western Zhou Dynasty about 1046 BCE and enfeoffed the princes. As a result, many rival vassal states sprang up. Among them, the Yan and Ji States sat where present-day Beijing and its surrounding areas are. Later, the Yan State gradually grew so strong that it annexed the Ji State, making it the capital and naming it Ji. At the onset of its establishment as a capital, passes and walls were constructed around it. A few hundred-years later, Ji, the capital of Yan State, became "the richest city under heaven" during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770–256 BCE).

During the Warring States Period (473–221 BCE), conquest raids were frequent among the vassal states. They built defence walls extensively and set up passes and garrisons on the borders and vital communication lines. Over 40 passes were set up by the Seven Warring States (the seven most powerful states at the time), including the Juyongguan Pass of the Yan State. In addition, the Yan State also built two defence walls in the north and the south. The southern Yan section of the Great Wall was built to strengthen the defence against the Qi State after King Zhao of Yan restored the Yan State by rallying talents of integrity around him. Lying by the Yishui River, the southern Yan section of the Great Wall was also named the Yishui section of the Great Wall. With its specific location in the southwest of present-day Yixian County, Baoding City, Hebei Province, it leads southeast to present-day Dacheng and Wen'an counties of Langfang City via the Dingxing, Xushui, Rongcheng, Anxin, and Xiong counties, extending about 500 *li*. Lying at a place where the agrarian civilisation of central China was divided from the pastoralist steppes, the Yan State often experienced invasion from the nomadic tribes. King Zhao of Yan launched an army and pushed the nomads back over

250 kilometres, thereby occupying a large tract of land. To safeguard the land, Yan constructed the northern Yan section of the Great Wall, which was the last of the walls built in the Warring State Period. They mainly spread throughout present-day Liaoning and Hebei provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, with a length of more than 1,500 kilometres. The Yan State placed the walls under the jurisdiction of five prefectures, one of which is Yuyang, located in the territory of present-day Miyun District of Beijing.

The Liao Dynasty was established by the Khitan people living in the northeast area outside the Great Wall. In 936 CE, the area south of the Great Wall was in the chaotic Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–979 CE). Shi Jingtang, the Military Commissioner of the Hedong Circuit of the Later Tang Dynasty, revolted. He asked help from the Khitans north of the Great Wall on the condition of ceding what historians call the “Sixteen Prefectures.” It was a historical region in northern China comprising the prefectures of You (now Beijing proper), Tan (now Miyun District, Beijing), Shun (now Shunyi District, Beijing), Ru (now Yanqing District, Beijing), Ji (now Jizhou District, Tianjin), Ying (now Hejian, Hebei), Mo (now north of Renqiu, Hebei), Zhuo (now Zhuozhou, Hebei), Xin (now Zhuolu, Hebei), Gui (now southeast of Huailai, Hebei), Wu (now Shencheng, Shanxi), Yun (now Datong, Shanxi), Ying (now Yingxian County, Shanxi), Huan (now northeast of Shuozhou, Shanxi), Shuo (now Shuozhou, Shanxi), and Wei (now southwest of Weixian County, Hebei). After taking over the “Sixteen Prefectures,” the Khitans established Beijing as the Liao Dynasty’s south capital (Nanjing), also known as Yanjing. All the “Sixteen Prefectures” were strategic locations on the Central Plains. You Prefecture was bounded by steep mountains in the north and the other Central Plains prefectures in the south.

Yun Prefecture connected Shanggu in the east, reached Bingheng in the south, bordered the Yellow River in the west, and dominated the desert in the north. Sitting strategically in the frontiers, it served as the protective screen for the capital. The cession of the prefectures rendered the Great Wall as the Central Plains’ defence barrier meaningless. As a result, the Yan-Ji area fell under the successive rule of different nomadic regimes over the following 400 years. It was during these 400 years that Yanjing gradually developed into a capital of a unified dynasty. It can be said that the cession of the “Sixteen Prefectures” and the establishment of Nanjing as the alternate capital of the Liao Dynasty lifted the curtain for Beijing on becoming a capital in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties till today, only to be briefly replaced by Jinling or Jiankang (present-day Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province).

In 1115 CE, a Nüzhen tribe in northeast China established the Jin Dynasty. It sent its army south in 1122 CE. The troops went through Deshengkou opening (present-day north of Changping, Beijing), penetrated the Juyongguan Pass, and eventually occupied Yanjing (present-day Beijing). The Nüzhen Jin Dynasty put Yanjing under its rule from 1125 CE. Digunai, whose sinicised name was Wanyan Liang, the fourth emperor of the Nüzhen Jin Dynasty, decreed that the dynasty’s capital be seated in Beijing as its Zhongdu (Central Capital), the political centre of the empire. Beijing’s 800-year history of being built into a capital ensued. The Nüzhen Jin’s association with the Great Wall was not confined to its attack against Yanjing through Juyongguan. It was the dynasty that resumed the construction of the Great Wall after its disruption during the Tang, Song, and Liao dynasties. The scale topped all the wall-building projects from the Qin and Han dynasties to the Nüzhen Jin. According to

historical records, there were two lines in the Nüzhen Jin Dynasty: the Old Mingchang and the New Mingchang Great Wall. The Old Mingchang Great Wall used to be called the Wuzhu section of the Great Wall or the Jinyuan Border Fort. It ran north of the New Mingchang Great Wall. According to the *Heilongjiang Provincial Chronicles*, this section of the Great Wall meandered along the Heilong River, northwest of the Hinggan Mountains in present-day Heilongjiang Province. The Nüzhen Jin built it to defend against the Mongolians 800 years ago. Also constructed for the same purposes, the New Mingchang Great Wall was farther away inside the Old Mingchang Great Wall. Also referred to as the Nüzhen Jin's Inner Line of the Great Wall, Jin Trench, and Border Fort, it ran from Jingzhou Prefecture (present-day Hetao, or the Great Bend, of the Yellow River drainage) to the bank of the Huntong River (present-day Songhua River) in the east. It traversed Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, and Heilongjiang for a few thousand kilometres.¹

In 1206 CE, Genghis Khan, the leader of the Mongolian tribes, established the Mongol Empire in the upper reaches of the Onon River in the Mobei (Northern Desert) Grassland. Starting from 1211 CE, Genghis Khan led the Mongolian army through the Juyongguan Pass three times, presenting a constant threat to the Central Capital of the Nüzhen Jin. In 1214 CE, the Nüzhen Jin relocated its capital to its southern capital in present-day Kaifeng, Henan Province, giving up the critical military sites in the strategic and dangerously inaccessible mountains and passes of the Great Wall in the north. Kublai Khan, the founder of the Yuan Dynasty, officially named it the Great

Yuan. He decreed the following year that the capital be relocated to Nüzhen Jin's Central Capital and renamed it Dadu. The Yuan Dynasty then conquered the Song Dynasty and unified China. Dadu of Yuan, therefore, became the capital of a unified, multi-ethnic feudal, centralised empire.² Beijing has since become the political and cultural centre of China. The Yuan Dynasty built it in all aspects, including urban construction, administrative management, water and land transport, and government order transmission. Dadu of Yuan topped the world in terms of its comprehensive planning and construction scale. China put forward the theory of urban planning 3,000 years ago. It is recorded in "Kao Gong Ji (Records of Examination of Craftsmen)" in *Zhou Li* (Rites of Zhou). According to "Kao Gong Ji," when artisans built a *guo* (city), they must place the ancestral temple on the left side of the palace, the altar of earth and heaven on the right, the Emperor's offices in the front, and the marketplace at the back. The construction of Dadu of Yuan loyally followed this ancient system. Though the palace of the Yuan Dynasty no longer exists, the Imperial Palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties has survived with the ancestral temple and the altar of earth and heaven. It is so rare in the world for a living example of a city planned and developed according to a 3,000-year-old architectural principle to remain to this day.³ It was the last capital in feudal China's 2,000-year history to rise from a flat ground according to an established plan, which was the most comprehensive and extensive in the world at the time. Dadu of Yuan was also the world trade centre at that time. Its streets bustling with merchants and well-groomed

1 Beijing Local History Compilation Committee. *Beijing Chronicles* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2008.

2 Ibid.

3 Luo Zhewen. *The History and Culture of Beijing* [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004.

pedestrians were signs of prosperity. The territory of the Yuan Dynasty spanned across Eurasia, a long distance north of the Great Wall. Besides, the rulers had come from the ranks of the nomads beyond it. Therefore, the Great Wall was of little significance to them. However, the Yuan Dynasty had many passes and strategically dangerous places repaired and guarded to prevent the Han and other ethnic peoples from staging uprisings and to facilitate the inspection of the merchants passing by. The scale of Juyongguan in Beijing during the Yuan Dynasty is more significant than it is now. In a sense, the Great Wall in the Yuan Dynasty functioned more socially than militarily. It promoted the integration and development of various ethnic groups living in the areas along the Great Wall. The Yuan Dynasty expanded its territory to Eurasia and established an enormous empire unprecedented in human history. To serve an extensive empire, it set up a perfect post house system. The rulers of the khanates attached great importance to commerce and trade so that the Silk Road in the Yuan Dynasty was much less obstructed than under the Han and Tang dynasties. Moreover, what was transported was not only limited to material commodities such as daily necessities and luxury goods. It also included the products of the most significant technological and cultural exchanges in human history before the 15th century: printing, gunpowder, and compass. Their transport via the Silk Road of the Yuan Dynasty promoted tremendous changes in world history.¹

In 1368 CE, the Ming army captured Yuan Dadu and renamed it Beiping. In 1403 CE, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty changed the name to Beijing and in 1421 CE, moved his capital here. The ancient capital Beijing we are

talking about today refers primarily to the city of Beijing established in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Covering the area within its Second Ring Road today, Beijing saw the planning and building of its basic layout completed in the Ming Dynasty. The Ming Tombs, lying opposite Beijing proper in the north, are large in scale and excellent in artistic design, and they constitute an integral part of the layout of Beijing. Defending the capital Beiping and the Ming Tombs around it, the Ming Dynasty section is the best part of the Great Wall. The Ming Dynasty faced tremendous pressure from the Mongolian power in the north at the onset of its founding. The Ming Dynasty centred its relationship with the Mongolian tribes and defence policies regarding the northern frontiers on the areas along the Great Wall. Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty initially wanted to leave the territories beyond the Great Wall in the north alone. He meant the frontier defence system along the Ming Great Wall we see today to be set up so that the people on both sides would “live in peace without contentions.” After the frontier conflict with the Mongol Northern Yuan in 1449 CE, an incident known as the Tumu Crisis to historians, the Ming Dynasty began to build the Great Wall defence system on a large scale to ensure the security of areas along the Great Wall. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, the rise of the Nüzhen tribes threatened to compromise the safety of the border areas. The Ming Dynasty began to strengthen the defence of the Great Wall in Liaodong and shifted its security measures on the Later Jin regime. The Ming Dynasty never stopped building the Great Wall and strengthening its defensive capabilities in its 200-year history. The Great Wall of China, a project that had been segmented walls in the

1 Luo Zhao. The “Silk Road” and the Capital Dadu of the Yuan Dynasty [C]. *Collection of Topical Materials from the Institute of History*, Beijing Academy of Social Sciences 2014. Beijing: Beijing Yanshan Press, 2015: 112–129.



The Huanghuacheng Lakeside Great Wall (2021)

Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods and had been pieced together by Qin Shihuang, reached its climax and ended in the Ming Dynasty.

The Qing was the last feudal dynasty in Chinese history. In the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, Nurhaci, the leader of the Nüzhen tribes, established Later Jin (1616–1636 CE). From 1618 CE, the Nüzhen broke through the Great Wall defence line four times, posing a threat to the Ming Dynasty's capital area. The Qing Dynasty, officially known as the Great Qing, was established in 1636 CE. In 1644 CE, Emperor Shunzhi, Aisin Gioro Fulin by name, arrived in Beijing for the enthronement ceremony and declared "Yanjing to be the capital." Where Beijing's urban planning was concerned, the Qing Dynasty almost wholly followed the old

system of the Ming Dynasty. The palaces, altars, temples, gardens, government offices, and residences were finalised, with the city laid out symmetrically on both sides of the central axis. Today, most of the traditional buildings in the ancient capital of Beijing were built in the Qing Dynasty. Remarkably few original Ming structures have survived. The construction of the ancient capital Beijing reached its peak in the Qing Dynasty. It continued to maintain and use the essential parts of the Great Wall and stationed soldiers and officers in some fortresses along the Great Wall to guard the main passes. For example, the Qing set up a garrison at the Juyongguan Pass, first led by an assistant regional commander and later a brigade vice commander. There were also officer-led garrisons in the few fortresses located at the Gubeikou Pass.¹ Unlike previous

1 Luo Zhenwen. *The History and Culture of Beijing*, Peking University Press, 2004.

dynasties, the Qing didn't build the Great Wall to separate outsiders from the insiders. Instead, it adopted a policy of control through conciliation to win over the upper-class Mongolian aristocracy, a mixed policy of carrot and stick, making the Mongol tribes a "stronger Great Wall" than physical barriers against the adversaries in the north.¹ When inspecting the Great Wall, Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty reflected on the past in the light of the present and felt all sorts of feelings welling up in his mind. He immediately decreed, "All the monarchs of the Great Qing after me must rule with benevolence, appeal to the multitude, train our troops, and not build the Great Wall anymore!"

Different Appearances of the Great Wall in Beijing

The Great Wall of Beijing straddles the steep ridges in the Pinggu, Miyun, Huairou, Yanqing, Changping, and Mentougou districts in the Jundu mountainous area of the Yanshan Mountains. Meandering through this area, the Great Wall presents various forms and shapes. It has witnessed the evolution of the Chinese civilisation and kept company with the ancient capital Beijing as the latter has survived and developed.

Conveniently located in the northeast of Beijing, Pinggu District provided access to traffic in all directions. Therefore, it was inherently known as "one of the three strategic points safeguarding the capital" and praised as something like "the bridge over the Heavenly River (Milky Way) and a pass defending Beijing and its environs." Pinggu's geological makeup of marine environments goes back to 1.5 billion years, and hundreds of millions of years' epirogenic movement has given

it the current form. It is a flat valley with its stratum belonging to the Mesoproterozoic Era that occurred from 1,600 to 1,000 million years ago. Its plains and piedmont zone are covered with sediments of the Quaternary Period. The main body of the mountains in Pinggu is formed by the sedimentary rock of the Mesoproterozoic Era. The rock has a radioisotope geological age of 1.85 to 1.4 billion years. The mountainous and semi-mountainous areas account for about two thirds of the total, and the plains account for about 1/3 total surface. There are 17 mountain peaks with an altitude of more than one kilometre. Pinggu has a long history and is rich in culture. The Palaeolithic excavation relics 100,000 years ago witnessed the early Chinese civilisation, and the over 7,000-year-old Neolithic Shangzhai Culture filled the gaps in the history of Beijing. Though desolate and remote, it has been blessed with over 4,000 years of Xuanyuan culture: the over 3,000-year-old Liujiahe site of the Shang Dynasty site is brilliantly vivid; over 2,200 years of construction history reproduces the heroic style of the Han Dynasty; more than 1,000 years of Taoist culture makes people nostalgic for the past in the light of the present; and human culture flourished from the Liao, Nüzhen Jin, and Yuan to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Meanwhile, the Central Plains and nomadic cultures met and transformed here. Pinggu has the characteristics of a cultural "node."

As we detail the history and culture of Pinggu, we appreciate the Great Wall all the more as a trove of profound culture. The Pinggu Great Wall takes advantage of the local landform: walls built on the ridges where the slopes are gentle and precipitous mountains are made part of the walls where they are

1 Ibid.

dangerously inaccessible. Extending a total length of 48.52 kilometres, the Pinggu section of the Great Wall is customarily called the “Great Wall of One Hundred Li.” The Pinggu section of the Great Wall, constructed of stone, is also known as the “Stone Great Wall of the North” and retains its primitive simplicity and magnificence. Distinctive in the Great Wall culture in Beijing, it is of precious historical and cultural value. The Pinggu section of the Great Wall is a national key heritage site.

Miyun District lies in a zone transitioning from the North China Plain to the Inner Mongolian Plateau. Seen from above, it is triangularsprawling 69 kilometres from east to west and 64 kilometres north to south. It overlooks the ocean on the left, sits by the Juyongguan Pass on the right, leans against the Great Wall in the north, and faces Huairou and Shunyi districts in the south. A prefecture named Yuyang in the Warring States Period, it enjoys a long history and splendid culture. As part of the Yanshan Mountains, its territory is replete with towering mountains that carry the undulating Great Wall on their summits. Forty-five to 1,730 metres in altitude, Miyun is higher in the east and the west and descends from the north to the south. Surrounded by mountains on three sides, it has a relatively flat landform in the centre and fans out in the southwest. The land is ostentatiously stepped with clear boundaries and a considerable difference in vertical elevations. The land is deeply ravined, and the soil layer thin. Slopes abound, and flat areas are few. Therefore, the area is humorously described as having “80% of mountains, 10% water, and 10% arable land.” The Chaohe and Baihe rivers meander in the east and the west, the Bailongtan and the Heilongtan lakes face each other at a distance, and Lake Baiyangdian, acclaimed as the “Pearl of North China,” is embedded at the centre. It is a place of magnificent mountains

and talented people. With a total area of 2,229.45 square kilometres, Miyun is the largest district in Beijing. It’s also a vital source of drinking water and a significant ecological conservation area of the capital.

The earliest section of the Great Wall in Miyun District was built by the Northern Qi Dynasty and rebuilt on a large scale by the Ming Dynasty. It has a total length of 182.1 kilometres and traverses 11 towns and 57 administrative villages. It is an essential part of the Great Wall in Beijing regarding its size, the density of its battlements, bastions, garrisons, and the perfection of its military facilities. The Miyun section of the Ming Great Wall is known for its notable features. It is also the epitome of the best of the Great Wall. Lofty mountains abound where the Great Wall passes. As it snakes along, it straddles mountain ridges, reinforcing valleys with passes and being garrisoned at strategic points. The structural features of various dynasties were borrowed in the construction of the Miyun section of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. Multiple improvements and innovations crafted it into a military defence system with beacons towers standing within visible distances from each other, battlements standing side by side, fortified passes controlling strategic points, defence lines staged in depth and steps, and defensive lines and points complementing and supporting each other. Among the sections of the Great Wall, the Simatai section is well-known for its “strategic position, inaccessible location, unexpected features, ingenious design, and complete supporting facilities.” The Simatai section of the Great Wall is exquisite in conception, unique in design, novel in structure, and different in shape, integrating many features of the Great Wall in one place. It was placed on the top of the “25 Must-See Scenic Spots of the World” list by *The Times* in 2012.

Lying about 50 kilometres away from downtown Beijing to the northeast, Huairou's geographical location is so important that it has earned the name "Beijing's North Gate." In the "Zhongyong (Doctrine of the Means)" chapter of *Liji (Classic of Rites)*, there is an adage saying, "Appeasing the people in remote places, people from all directions will submit, and caring for the princes of various states, the people of the whole country will show their respect." Huairou, meaning "appeasing," has gotten its name because it used to be where different ethnic peoples lived together. Located at the southern foot of the Yanshan Mountains with 2,122.8 square kilometres, Huairou is the second largest district in Beijing. Its terrain rises in the north and descends in the south. Narrowing in both southward and northward, it takes the shape of a dumbbell. Mountainous Huairou leans against the Yanshan Mountains and neighbors the North China Plain in the south. While the famous Great Wall serves as the district's border, the mountains beyond it in the north roll lushly, forming a natural green barrier shielding the capital Beijing. In orderly gradation, the land presents distinct shades: dark mountains, light mountains, and the plains display their particular features. The unique natural environment with rich historical sites makes Huairou the "back garden" of Beijing.

The majestic Great Wall and the mesmerising Yanqi Lake have become the two signature scenic spots of gorgeous Huairou. Closely linked, they present their beauty to the world and integrate it to perfection. The Huairou section of the Great Wall occupies an important position in the history of the Great Wall of China in terms of construction quality, architectural style, and defence capabilities. As an essential part of the Great Wall, the Huairou section is connected to the Gubeikou Pass in Miyun District in the east, the Juyongguan Pass in Changping District in the west, and

22 natural villages in Huaibei, Yanqi, Bohai, and Jiuduhe towns from east to west. With a length of 65.4 kilometres, the Huairou section of the Great Wall accounts for 12.4% of the 526.7 kilometre Great Wall in Beijing. The Huairou section of the Great Wall lies at a strategic and magnificent point. With abundant historical remains, it is a nationally protected heritage site. The Huairou Great Wall was expected to be a vital defence point of Beijing, its surrounding areas, and the Ming Tombs. Therefore, great attention was given to the scientific selection of its route, the design, and the solidity of its structure. As a result, it's well-known to the world for its strategically located Guancheng and forest of battlements. Most of the defensive systems like the battlements and bastions on the undulating Great Wall are well-preserved. Despite 600 years of weathering, the Qilianguan, Mutianyuguan, Yaoziyu, and Jiankou passes still stand in their original majesty on the top of the Yanshan Mountains.

Yanqing District is located in the northwest of Beijing, 74 kilometres away from Beijing's Deshengmen (Desheng Gate). It spreads 1,993.75 square kilometres, of which 72.8% is mountainous, 26.2% is flat, and 1% water. With an average altitude of 500 metres or more and has a unique climate with cold winters and cool summers, Yanqing is dubbed as the "Summer Capital." As a competition zone for important events of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, Yanqing is now known as "A Winter Sports Town."

In history, Yanqing experienced seven large-scale migrations caused by political rise and fall and military turmoil. At present, Yanqing has 15 townships and three sub-districts under its jurisdiction, with 314,000 permanent residents. The Great Wall runs through nine of the townships and 130 administrative villages. Passing Yanqing's

territory is 179.1 kilometres of the remaining Great Wall. Of the walls, 28.2 kilometres are compacted earth, 103.7 kilometres are stones, and 26.6 kilometres are brick. Besides, there are 473 battlements, 86 beacon towers, 42 bastions, and 21 other sites of historical remains. Of them, the most famous is the Badaling section of the Great Wall. It was developed into a tourism site in 1958. “Badaling section of the Great Wall” was identified as the first set of nationally protected heritage sites in March 1961. The Badaling Special Zone Office was established in 1981. Since then, the cultural tourism industry led by the Badaling section of the Great Wall has extensively promoted Yanqing’s economic and social development. The Great Wall of China was included in the “World Heritage List” by UNESCO in 1987. In 1991, UNESCO issued the “World Cultural Heritage” certificate to the Badaling section of the Great Wall as a representative of the Great Wall of China. The Badaling section of the Great Wall has become the world’s number one scenic spot favoured by foreign guests. It is also an essential platform for China to conduct foreign affairs and a window to international exchanges.

Located in the northwest of Beijing, Changping District has the reputation as the “pillow of the capital” and the “capital’s limbs.” The landform of Changping District is greatly affected by the compressing movement of the tectonic plates of the Taihang and Yanshan mountains. The Jundu Mountain in the middle is the product of this tectonic movement. Changping District is home to mountains over mountains, with the opening at the Juyongguan Pass demarking the Taihang and the Yanshan mountains. The former is on the west side, generally running southwest-northeast. There are over 80 legendary peaks and 23 rises over one kilometres above sea level. The highest, named “Gaolou (tall

building),” soars 1,439.8 metres into the sky. The Dujun Mountain, part of the Yanshan Mountains, lies northwest-southeast on the north side. It boasts 170 named peaks, but only five have an altitude above 1,000 metres. The highest peak is the Mopan Mountain, which is 1,066 metres above sea level. Changping District contains the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs, the Zhubi Mountain, and the site of the Baifu Spring remains, which is the “utmost source of the Grand Canal.” The district is the only place in Beijing that embraces the cultures of the Grand Canal, the Great Wall, and the western hills.

Since the opening at the Juyongguan Pass was the most accessible passage from the Mongolian Plateau to the North China Plain, Changping had been a battleground for military strategists since the Warring States Period. Many dynasties built military facilities in Changping. They included the Great Wall, the Juyongguan Pass, and the bastions of Nankoucheng, Shangguancheng, Baiyangcheng, and Changyucheng. Juyongguan Pass, among them, is a masterpiece of ancient Chinese military defence and civil engineering projects. The Ming Dynasty, in particular, constructed a defence system with complete facilities around Juyongguan. They comprised the Nankoucheng, Shangguancheng, Badaling, and Chadaocheng fortresses in a north-south lineup. From east to west, there were the bastions of Huanghuacheng, Baiyangcheng, Changyucheng, Zhenbiancheng, and Henglingcheng. From the end of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century, the Ming Tombs Special Zone Office invested huge sums of money to repair the Juyongguan Pass in two phases, making it a scenic tourism spot enjoyed and appreciated by tourists from both home and abroad.

Mentougou District is situated in the western suburbs of Beijing. It is the only





The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2016)

exclusively mountainous area in Beijing. One of the earliest areas of human activity in Beijing, it enjoys a long history of profound culture. The upright walking man known as the “Donghulin Man” marks the emergence of standing *homo sapiens erectus*. The endlessly flowing Yongding River gave birth to the significant capital of the Chinese Nation. Dongling Mountain, which soars 2,303 metres above sea level, is reputed as the “Mount Qomolangma” in the west of Beijing. The first largest Buddhist house of worship Tanzhe Temple, adds a few thousand years of history to Beijing. The Jingxi Gudao (ancient roads in the west of Beijing) connects the capital to the desert in the frontiers. Nearly a hundred ancient villages interpret Beijing’s rich humanistic history. The Miaofeng Mountain, a sacred place of Beijing’s folk culture, has cherished a tradition of harmony and co-prosperity. They are not only Mentougou’s iconic historical and cultural features but also brilliant samples of Beijing’s culture.

Ever since ancient times, the specific geographical location and topography had turned this place into a battlefield for military strategists. A witness to frequent wars, it has become a base for cultivating Beijing’s military culture. The Great Wall culture in western Beijing was born and developed in this base. Human activities have never ceased in Mentougou District west of Beijing since the Palaeolithic period. It connects to the mountains and rivers of Zhuolu, one of the birthplaces of the Yanhuang culture, which lifted the curtain on China’s five thousand years of civilisation. The various ethnic groups in the northern part of China competed and mingled here. Most rulers of feudal dynasties saw this place as “the ridge controlling the world and a strategic location defending Huaxia (a historical concept representing the Chinese Nation and civilisation)” and “the capital’s right arm.”

They considered it capable of allowing a few soldiers to fend off an army. Therefore, they kept building the Great Wall and bastions and set up passes and garrisons at the dangerously inaccessible location in the west of the capital to control the edge of the western hills and the roads leading deep into the north. The Han Dynasty constructed beacon towers, the Northern Qi Dynasty built the Great Wall, the Eastern Wei Dynasty erected battlements, and the Yuan Dynasty created the bastions. Then, the Ming Dynasty carried out large-scale construction and improvement based on the Great Wall and the passes built in the past, producing a set of crisscrossing, interconnected defence systems on the Great Wall and its fortresses at the mountain openings. This defence system effectively defended the capital like a powerful arm. Today, apart from ancient military remains such as beacon towers, the Great Wall, Guancheng, tunnels, military roads, and watchtowers, people will have a chance to see in this area villages inhabited by descendants of garrison soldiers and customs associated with the troops.

For whom the Great Wall was Built and Why Did China Rise?

The Great Wall itself didn’t care about human affairs, so why on earth did the Chinese build it?

The ancients lived by the water and used river water to irrigate farmland, the lifeline of their survival. As a result, the four ancient civilisations prospered and have left indelible marks on world maps. Fertile land was the cradle of civilisations but was also coveted by “barbarians.” When the fires of wars sent the ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, and Indian cultures into the dusty clouds of history, only the Chinese civilisation survived and is standing like the Great Wall among nations

on the globe. The Great Wall, which has been continuously built and repaired by the Chinese in different periods, reflects the endless growth of the Chinese Nation.

Struggle and fighting are unavoidable in the development of every human culture. Martyrs' blood has paved the way on which the wheels of history roll forward. To keep the fruit of prosperity, the locals must face invasion by outsiders. A prosperous civilisation must know how to resist aggression to keep the fruit intact. At the beginning of its "Military Forms to Perceive" chapter in *The Art of War*, we read "The good fighters in the past first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity to defeat the enemy." Generals good at directing military operations must first make sure that they are not defeated and then find opportunities to conquer the enemy. Such military strategic thinking is the basis for creating the Great Wall defensive project, which preserves and continues the integrity and unity of ancient Chinese civilisation.

In his *A Global History: From Prehistory to the 21st Century*, Leften Stavros Stavrianos mentioned why only China enjoys the oldest and continuous civilisation with the vitality to last till today. He also discussed why other ancient civilisations underwent fundamental changes after being destroyed by conquerors.

From a geographical perspective, the degree of isolation between the Chinese civilisation and other great civilisations of humankind is unique. The Mediterranean Sea connected Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and the Indian Ocean enabled India to interact with the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. But China's agricultural production and living areas were cut off from the rest of the world on all sides. China faces

the Pacific Ocean that could not be crossed until modern times in the east and south. The Pamirs in the west and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Himalayas, known as the "Roof of the World," in the southwest are still hardly surmountable natural barriers under the current human conditions. Only the northern Mongolian Plateau, the North China Plain, and the northern part of the Loess Plateau, which are connected, lack impassable barriers under the limited protection of deserts and prairies.¹ Here, the Chinese built a continuous Great Wall to withstand the invasion of nomads to compensate for the lack of defence in northern China and keep the Chinese civilisation going.

After invasions, China has not undergone earth-shaking changes in culture and systems like Europe and India, taking advantage of a vast population and vast landmass. Instead, it has always maintained its particular characteristics while assimilating foreign cultures and adapting some aspects to enrich its traditional culture.

Agriculture laid the foundation for Chinese society. The available arable land has determined the range of distribution of the Chinese civilisation and the settlement lifestyle and model that has enabled the Chinese to live more stable lives and the society to progress. The production system and lifestyle based on agriculture emphasise the coordination and harmonisation of heaven, earth, and Man. Under such a grand agricultural and environmental view, China's rural areas and farmers have carried the entire country afloat on their generous backs, nurturing the land and enabling the Chinese civilisation to develop more stably and preventing the Chinese people from roaming around homeless.

It is true to say that the vast land, the isolated geographical environment, huge

1 Chronicles of the Great Wall: Overview.

population and stable agricultural production and living lifestyle have promoted the continuous development of the Chinese civilisation. However, the most critical factor contributing to the cohesive development of the Chinese civilisation and keeping it from being interrupted like other ancient civilisations is the Confucian cultural thoughts. Leften Stavros Stavrianos commented: “Perhaps the most important factor that contributes to the cohesion of Chinese civilisation is the moral code and literary and ideological heritage commonly known as Confucianism.” The all-embracing concept advocated in Confucianism has kept the Chinese civilisation from disappearing and being interrupted in the collision with other societies. Instead, it has helped form a new traditional culture from assimilating different cultures, promoting the continuation and progress of this ancient civilisation.

The Great Wall of China is a creation by and a symbol of a great civilisation, and it is the Chinese civilisation that created it.¹ While a unified feudal nation was established in the Central Plains, the Xiongnu tribes in northern China also established a powerful unified nomadic state centred on the Mongolian grasslands. In the following two thousand years, the nomadic and the farming societies in China contended, coexisted, interacted, competed and merged with each other, forming a unique evolutionary trend of Chinese civilisation. In the Great Wall area, the living conditions and economic behaviours of different ethnic groups coexisted or existed alternately, thus giving rise to a competitive economic condition in which they competed for resources. The farming society on the Central Plains needed to respond to the northern nomadic civilisation’s intrusion constantly. But sufficient population and

settled agricultural lifestyle made the long-term construction of the Great Wall necessary and feasible. With the Confucian moral principle of “harmony is precious” in mind, the dynastic rulers of the Central Plains did not build active offensive war fortifications on a large scale. Instead, they constructed the Great Wall system with defence strategy as its military function and peace seeking as the basis for military decision-making. A military defence system built to strengthen defence works, to evacuate the civilian population and conceal provisions and livestock, the Great Wall embodies the Chinese character and vision of “neither wanting nor willing to fight while fearing not to fight.” It has enabled the Chinese civilisation to continue and prosper.

In 1935 CE, the Chinese Nation was at a critical crossroads of life and death. The movie *Children of Troubled Times* debuted. Its theme song “March of the Volunteers,” lyricised by Tian Han and composed by Nie Er, became an instant hit throughout China. It inspires the Chinese to keep fighting arduously. The inspiration for creating the theme song came from the Defence of the Great Wall (1933 CE) in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931–1945 CE). Gubeikou, as the most comprehensive part of the Great Wall system, is the largest gateway to the North China Plain from the Yanshan Mountains. It had always been a battleground for military strategists in Chinese history. It is also one of the Great Wall passes that have witnessed many wars in history, including 138 documented battles of various scales. The Gengxu Crisis (1550 CE) and the Defence of the Great Wall took place here as their major battleground. After the September 18 Incident occurred in 1931, China lost its Northeast to the

1 Ma Ruijiang. *Motivation and Mechanism from Pluralism to Unity: A Historical Study on the Evolution of Nomadic and Farming Groups Inside and Outside the Great Wall* [D]. Tianjin: Tianjin Normal University Press, 2008.

Japanese aggressors who brought the flames of war to the foot of the Great Wall. The Defence of the Great Wall broke out.

In February 1933, the Japanese army attacked Rehe, a province in the Republic era where present-day Hebei, Liaoning, and Inner Mongolia met. The Battle of Rehe and the Defence of the Great Wall ensued. Some of the Northeastern Volunteer Righteous and Brave Fighters moved closer to Rehe. At that time, Nie Er, who was only 21 years old, went to Rehe with a group to visit the fighters. When the visiting delegation arrived, there sprang up the oath song of the volunteer righteous and brave fighters:

Stand up! Stand up!

Those who refuse to be slaves!

Our homeland is destroyed and our Nation in peril.

What's the use of having our heads on our shoulders?

Pick up knives and guns to march on!

Brave the enemies' fire and march on!

Let's march hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder!

Let's fear no death and march on!

With our flesh and blood, let's build our Great Wall!

...

This oath of a Northeastern Volunteer Righteous and Brave Fighters army has the line “With our flesh and blood, let's build our Great Wall” in the lyrics created by Gao Pengzhen, commander-in-chief of the Northeast Anti-Japanese National Salvation Army. He did it when establishing the “Zhenbei Army.” As soon as he got hold of the lyrics, Nie Er read them aloud and excitedly played the tune of

“Man Jiang Hong” (river of blossoms) and asked the soldiers to sing along. In March of the same year, Tian Han also arrived at Gubeikou with a visiting delegation. There, he witnessed the bloody and heroic battle of the Defence of the Great Wall. He repeatedly used the words “The New Great Wall,” “The Great Wall of Iron,” and “The Great Wall of Flesh and Blood” when he created his lyrics after that. Tian Han and Nie Er obtained their crucial raw materials for creating “The March of the Volunteers” from this battle.

After filming the movie *Children of Troubled Times* in 1935, Nie Er, who was in Japan to avoid the Nationalist authorities' pursuit and arrest, finalised the composition of his “March Song” and mailed the manuscript back to China. Zhu Qinglan, the investor in the movie, added the word “volunteers” to the title. After the film's release, “The March of the Volunteers” soon became the best-known anti-Japanese song, inspiring the Chinese's patriotism. It later became the national anthem of the People's Republic of China. Comparing patriotic warriors to the “Great Wall of Flesh” was a common mobilisation discourse in the Defence of the Great Wall battle at that time. Such a discourse, relying on the profound culture centred on the Great Wall, is imbued with vitality and generates tremendous energy, and it is still soul-stirring to the listeners today. The tradition of describing an arm as *gangtie changcheng* (“the Great Wall of steel”) still applies to today's People's Liberation Army. These few Chinese characters embody the mission of defending the homeland and nation, the indomitable Chinese spirit to brave the flames of war, and the yearning for peace.



The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2017)

The background of the page is a photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a dense thicket of dark green and brown shrubs. Behind them, a long, low stone wall made of irregular, light-colored stones runs across the frame. The wall follows the contour of a hill. In the background, there are more hills and mountains, some of which are partially obscured by a thick layer of white mist or low clouds. The sky above is a mix of soft orange, pink, and blue hues, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is serene and atmospheric.

Part II

The Beauty of Coalescence

Rolling away is the Great Wall; it extends an impressive three thousand li. The huge defence work undulates along the Yanshan Mountains and straddles the dividing line between central China's farming civilisation and nomadic civilisation, defying the tribulations of all ages. When warfare recedes, trading and villages bloom. The trials witnessed by the Great Wall, in essence, are a history relating the conflict and integration of agro-pastoral cultures, a history about the inclusive development of the Chinese Nation, and a history of its ever-growing vitality and influence. Today, when the destiny of humankind is more intertwined than ever, the Great Wall of China is destined to become a renewed force that promotes the exchanges and mutual learning of civilisations all over the world.

The Strategy of Ending War with War and the Passage to Peace

Northern Qi mobilised several massive efforts to build the Great Wall during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, shaping the orientation and defensive layout of the Great Wall in Beijing. When Zhu Di, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty, moved his capital to Beiping Prefecture at the foot of the Yanshan Mountains and renamed it “*Shuntianfu*,” the northern part of the Yanshan Mountains, only a hundred miles away, was the grasing land he ceded to the Mongol tribes. This marks the beginning of Beijing “being isolated in the remote north” and “the Emperor relocating the capital to safeguard the border areas,” a rare phenomenon that ended only after two centuries.¹ Later, tracing the remains of Northern Qi, the Ming Dynasty built what turned out to be the greatest and most complete Great Wall in China’s history – the Ming Great Wall, which later became the central part of the Great Wall in Beijing today.

The Great Wall in Beijing, built in the capital’s environs to safeguard it, was a critical stabiliser of the ancient capital’s social order. Being an integral part of Beijing’s 3,000-year history as a city and 800-year history as a capital, it has also allowed Chinese civilisation to survive and evolve at its own pace.

War is transient, but peace is long-lasting. The Great Wall was built to stave off war and give peace a chance. It is a unique wonder, not just because of how it fended off invasion, but also for acting as a passage to peaceful development.

**Steel, Toughened and Hardened,
Is Now Flexible Enough to Wrap
Round a Finger**

More often than not, antagonism has existed between different civilisations.²

1 Wei Min and Liu Xiaotao. *The Great Wall – the Ancient Country and the Homeland* [M]. China International Communication Centre Publishing, 2021.

2 Samuel Huntington. *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* [M], trans. Zhou Qi, et. al., Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2010.

Yan and Zhao, two vassal states during the Warring States Period, resorted to their military might, driving the nomads to the northern foot of the Yanshan Mountains before building a wall to keep them at bay. The division of the Yanshan Mountains gave rise to different natural environments between the north and the south, but this boundary between the farming areas of central China in the south and the nomadic pastoral areas in the north began to carry significant political and social connotations. As a result, the contention for living space between the two production methods of farming and animal husbandry underwent a drastic change, determining the basic pattern of how the northern frontier developed throughout history, namely via the continuous contention between the actively invading nomads and the passively defending Han people.¹

Over the past 5,000 years, China has seen four cold periods, with the isothermal curves moving southward by 20 to 30 kilometres during troughs. Every time a cold season hit, shrinking the living space of the nomads who “migrated often in search of water and grass” shrank, the people had to flee from the grasslands they had come to know so well, confronting the fierce counterattacks of the farming regime’s army in their massive southward incursions. Time and time again, the farming civilisation and the nomadic civilisation clashed on the dividing line of farming and pastoral areas. Thus, it is the differences between the environments and the clashes between the civilisations that had given birth to the Great Wall, which provided a strong defence system for dynasties in central China to reinforce weak links in their natural barriers.

Chao Cuo, a statesman from the Western Han Dynasty, explained the living habits of the northern nomads in his “On Guarding the Frontiers While Promoting Agriculture.” He

believed, “The Hu people derive their food and clothing from activities that are not based on real property, and they are conditioned to harass our borders. How do I know that? The Hu people eat meat, drink cheese, wear animal fur, and possess no farms. They are like birds and beasts in the wild, sojourning in places with abundant water and grass and moving on when these natural resources are depleted. So, they’re always on the move. These are the survival skills of the Hu people, and they also explain why we Chinese leave that land to seek refuge in the south.” The northern nomads enjoyed greater mobility and were preconditioned by their behaviour styles and environmental factors to carry out invasions. They also account for why the Chinese ended up cultivating land in the south. Then, there were times of looting and conflicts. “Today, the Hu people repeatedly invade our fortresses and graze nearby. If we imitate the Yan Kingdom and Dai Kingdom or Shangjun, Beidi, and Longxi and use garrisons to defend the fortresses, we cannot mount an effective defence due to lack of soldiers. If the Emperor does not send troops to rescue, the people near the border would be desperate and surrender. If the Emperor sends troops, it would not work if there are few, though it would take a long time to deploy troops if there are many, and by the time they are ready, the Hu people may have left already. Besides, stationing soldiers to guard the frontier costs a lot, and withdrawing them may encourage the Hu people to come back. If this is to repeat year after year, China could be impoverished, and the people could be deprived of a peaceful life.” Border conflicts persisted, causing great suffering to the people, but the attempts to send in troops to safeguard the borders did not fare well. He thus praised what Emperor Wen of Han did to govern the borders before proposing himself, for the first

1 Hou Renzhi, *A Historical Geography of Beijing* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2013.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2016)

time in history, a remarkable suggestion about garrisoning the border while farming. “Your Majesty worry about the border’s security, and send generals, officials, and soldiers to defend the border. This is surely a blessing for the people. However, if soldiers ordered to guard the frontier fortresses are replaced every year, it would be impossible for them to better understand the capabilities of the Hu people. It is better to rely on local people, who live there all year round and have purchased land and settled down. For the convenience of defence, we may ask people to dig deep trenches, build a high fort, prepare large stones and place caltrops on the ground. We may have another enclosure built within the fort, the two of which are 150 paces apart. In critical points, for example, at the junction of rivers, we can establish a town, sheltering more than a thousand households, and let the residents to live in fenced communities.” Chao Cuo effectively accounted for why the Great Wall was built in ancient China and put forward concrete plans and specific guidelines

about empowering towns to defend the border. The nomads in the north, skilled at riding, shooting, and launching assaults, were at their best when fighting on horseback; they could battle either individually or as a team, not being held back by anything on the wide open spaces of the grasslands. The town wall that stood in their way and stretched across ten thousand *li* could hamper the cavalry, stopping them from going south and looting while allowing the farming civilisation to evolve and dynasties in central China to survive.

Running our fingertips across the bricks or stones, one can envision the flames and smoke of gunpowder that lingered at the foot of the Great Wall. The yelling of soldiers and collision of halberds seem to puncture the sky, a reminder of how fierce the life-and-death rivalry between the two civilisations had been. Du Fu, the great Tang poet, related such in his “The Pressgang at Stone Moat Village” when he wrote, “This is what I overheard the old lady saying, ‘My three sons were defending Yecheng. One of them just sent me a



The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2017)

letter, saying the other two were killed in action. The survivors are now dragging out an ignoble existence, while the dead are forever gone!’” Civilisations collided and went to war, and losses inevitably ensued. The clarion lamented changes of feudal dynasties and regimes, while the people, plunged in the abyss of suffering, were constantly yearning for peace and stability.

The history of warfare is one suffused with people’s blood and tears, where one can hear their aspirations for peace and stability reverberating again and again. Edgar Geil, the famed American traveller, remarked after visiting the Great Wall, “For many centuries, the Chinese have devoted themselves to the art of peace. From the bottom of their hearts, they despise militant warriors.” Wars and conflicts surrounding the Great Wall are an important set of contradictions in ancient China’s military activities. However, the Great Wall is essentially a military defence work built under the guidance of this strategic thought: You can dominate your enemy if well prepared; otherwise you will be dominated. When it comes to deciding on a means to resolve conflicts, the Chinese also make sure that they “take the initiative only when justified.”

Throughout history, most places along the Great Wall have not seen wars, and for the most part, in places where wars were fought, no subsequent conflicts have occurred. Despite the untold hardships in building the Great Wall, sometimes involving losses of lives, people would opt for this if it meant dreadful wars could be evaded. *Zi Zhi Tong Jian (Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance)*, a reference work in Chinese historiography, keeps a record of what Gao Lü, secretariat supervisor of the Northern Wei Dynasty, proposed to Emperor Xiaowen in response to the harassment from the north: “Building a long wall benefits us in five ways: first, it can obviate the need to patrol the border; second, we will not be afflicted by the northern tribes looting the border areas when grasing; third, when we mount the wall, it provides a vantage for surveillance, allowing us to prepare to confront enemies when they are tired ; fourth, staying alert all the time will not be necessary; and fifth, by transporting grains to the frontiers, we will not suffer scarcity of supplies anymore.” With the Great Wall providing defence, wars were fought much less often and at a reduced scale; the common people lived and worked happily; and society within and outside

the Great Wall progressed with greater stability. Edgar Geil believed that the Great Wall was a gesture to pray for peace and a sign of peace and it was made by people with peace in mind.

Inscription on the Yanshan Mountains Chronicling a Military Career

Belligerent rulers of the Yuan Dynasty launched numerous punitive expeditions, plunging people of all ethnic groups in central China into the abyss of suffering. When ill-advised ethnic policies and frequent natural disasters aggravated people's woes, the inland people, mainly of the Han ethnic group, rose up in arms. The anti-Yuan rebel army led by Zhu Yuanzhang was quick to overthrow the rule of Yuan and established the Ming Dynasty. The Ming Dynasty, a national regime and a successor of Yuan, was in dire need to protect itself from Mongolian forces marching southward and mobilised dozens of large-scale efforts to build, extend, and reinforce the Great Wall, digging deep trenches and erecting fortifications over a time span of more than 200 years. The resulting work connects the Jundu Mountain and the western mountainous areas of Beijing, winding its way through towering mountains in Beijing's six districts (*i.e.*, Pinggu, Miyun, Huairou, Yanqing, Changping, and Mentougou) and constituting the bulk of today's Beijing Great Wall. When the Chinese territory was finally unified again, it was emperors who relocated the capital to guard the border areas this time. At the foot of the Yanshan Mountains, from the swords and halberds buried there, one can still imagine how gallantly their heroic owners fought.

The ten-faced stele (though actually eight-faced after further research) of "The Yanshan Mountains' Inscription of Achievements," erected in the first year during Emperor Wanli's reign of the Ming Dynasty (1573 CE) outside

the east gate of Miyun New Town, bears the writing of Wang Daokun, Assistant Minister of War at the time, about the life of Qi Jiguang, a renowned anti-Japanese general and military strategist. Wang, who himself was a prestigious opera performer and also an anti-Japanese general in the Ming Dynasty, was a lifetime friend of Qi, with their friendship being hailed as a "bond of poetry and swords." They met four times and exchanged poems in letters regularly during their 25-year friendship, which was brought to an abrupt end by Qi's death.

The Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty saw the southeast coast harassed by Japanese pirates and the northern border in a tense situation. In the first year of Longqing (1567 CE), Qi was dispatched to guard Jimen, Changping, and Baoding and other places in the north. He led the army and civilians to repair several sections of the Great Walls in northern Beijing, mostly in Miyun. That effort also offered an opportunity for him to fulfil his aspiration to "build 1,000 chariots, tame more than 10,000 steeds, and drill tens of thousands of armour-clad soldiers," and "dispatch hundreds of thousands of soldiers to march thousands of miles beyond the border areas." For some 16 years, Qi was committed to drilling a strong army that kept the nomadic tribes at bay. As a result, both the army and civilians in Ji Prefecture were "safe and sound, without a single arrow shot," and the people within the Great Wall lived a peaceful life and engaged in normal production.

Qi spent his life on horseback, fighting battles in the north and south. Being a famed general extolled by later generations, he was immensely instrumental to Ming's rule and stability. "The Yanshan Mountains' Inscription of Achievements" is an account of Tan Lun (the governor-general of the Jiliao area) and Qi Jiguang (the commander-in-chief of Jizhen) drilling soldiers and repairing the Great Wall in the northern border areas. According to the text,

when Tan and Qi were in office, they surveyed the terrain along the 1,000-li border line; examined and studied possible war scenarios; built three thousand towers at key points of the Great Wall; recruited soldiers and rehearsed vehicle warfare; and adapted combat tactics and started large-scale drilling near the border. The stele, giving an authentic account of Qi's brilliant achievements in the Jimen area, is a perfect testimonial of him pulling off an extraordinary feat in guarding the northern border.

The text was written in the sixth year of Emperor Longqing's reign in the Ming Dynasty (1572 CE), when Wang and Qi met in Jimen. The year also marked the fifth year since Qi started guarding Jimen. The Ming government sent high-level military officials to inspect the border defence. Wang Daokun was appointed to inspect the Jiliao area. For more than 20 days, Wang reviewed the exercises and drills of Qi's army, and was convinced that what Qi was leading was nothing short of a top-performing force. This positive impression was shared by other inspecting officials. Qi and Wang then wrote and exchanged poems to express their joy. Qi started his "Grand Review at Tangquan and the Preface" by saying, "The court dispatched envoys to review my army, and Mr. Wang, Assistant Minister of War, was among them..." The full poem reads:

With the advent of these envoys, the flags are fluttering against a setting sun. The Emperor's prestige being here, this sacred place is emboldened.

The formation of chariots being put in place, I still need to employ bold strategies to keep the place safe.

Towering buildings, guarded secure, glisten and appear golden; the bayonets used by my soldiers wave like dancing snowflakes.

Having done my job for years, I'm not ready to seek favouritism from the Emperor; gray-haired, I am indeed grateful to have someone close to the emperor to appreciate what I have accomplished.

The poem is magnificent and powerful, as one might expect from pieces written by a general. Within a short span of five years, Qi put into practice the chariot formation proposed in the Hulin Military Talk and proved his mettle. He also found favour with the Emperor because of his effective management of the army. Qi also said he was appreciative of the envoy close to the emperor (referring to Wang Daokun) and implied that it was not an easy feat at all to implement his drilling plan. Qi was only 44 then, but his hair was grizzled.

Wang's text, "The Yanshan Mountains' Inscription of Achievements," captured all of this and was written on the slab by Zhou Tianqiu, a calligrapher and painter of the Ming Dynasty.¹ Thus, the text was authored by a famed artist and later penned by an accomplished calligrapher, chronicling brilliant achievements of a prestigious general. Being a perfect blending of these three things, the ten-faced stele has been lauded as "One Slab, Three Wonders."

Fragments of Stone Tablets Telling an Enchanting Background Story

Zhenluoying, as one of the passes of the Great Wall in northern Pinggu, is mentioned multiple times in *Chronicle of Four Towns and Three Passes*. Over the years, the world has seen a sea change, and the pass has witnessed centuries of vicissitudes. Among the few stone tablets and plaques that have survived

1 The Education, Cultural, Healthcare, and Sports Committee of the Beijing CPPCC and International Institute for Urban Development. The "Miyun Volume" of *The Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House. 2018.

in Pinggu, five relate to Zhenluoying in one way or another, namely the stone tablet for the reconstruction of Zhenluying, the Zhenluying plaque, the northern strategic town plaque, the inscribed stone for repairing the Shaling brick pier of Tower #10 of Nanshuiyu, and the inscribed stone for repairing Yushuling tower. These stones and plaques give a vivid account of how Zhenluoying, as a strategic tower on the northern frontier, evolved and what momentous events occurred.

The inscription on the stone tablet for reconstruction of Zhenluoying reads, “This work was commenced in the spring of the year of Jiajing and completed on the 29th day of the 10th month in autumn. This passage was written to commemorate it.” Building the Great Wall had a lot to do with national security and was also welcomed by local residents because it would ensure stability of the locality. A lot was at stake: it was a critical link between other sections of the Great Wall; nearby areas and people could have the support and protection they craved; and it would facilitate commodity exchanges, trade exchanges, and steady development of agricultural production. If the authority could be committed to doing the job well, it could earn credibility and people’s trust and loyalty. According to how things work, all these efforts should help the authority burnish its image as being meritorious and powerful and stave off and even defeat the enemy, keeping the place peaceful forever.

Chronicle of Four Towns and Three Passes has multiple mentions of 镇罗营 (*zhenluoying*), though always referring to it as 镇虏营 (*zhenluying*). This contrasts with *General Annals of the Capital City and Its Environs* of the Qing Dynasty, which chooses to call it 镇罗营 (*zhenluoying*). Replacing “虏 (*lu*)” with “罗 (*luo*)” had everything to do with the cruel “*wenzi yu*,” the imprisonment

of scholars for writing something considered offensive, in the Qing Dynasty. “胡 (*hu*),” “虏 (*lu*),” “夷 (*yi*),” “狄 (*di*),” etc., were taboo characters that one should avoid, usually by replacing them with spaces, blots, or similarly pronounced characters, such as “狐 (*hu*)” for “胡 (*hu*)” and “罗 (*luo*)” for “虏 (*lu*).” This is the reason behind the character “虏 (*lu*)” in “镇虏关 (*zhenluguan*)” or “镇虏营 (*zhenluying*)” in the Ming Dynasty being swapped out for “罗 (*luo*),” hence today’s names “镇罗关 (*zhenluoguan*)” and “镇罗营 (*zhenluoying*).”

Even the fragmented stone tablets afforded later generations a more objective understanding of why the Great Wall was built. First, people tend to view the Great Wall in different ways: some think the Great Wall of China was built at the expense of blood and flesh; some believe it was built by central China’s rulers to deter nomadic peoples; and still others equal the Great Wall to a white elephant, a sheer waste of energy and money. The fragments of stone tablets, however, can prove otherwise. “Because... satisfies the people’s aspirations... must show compassion with residents living near the border... connecting merchants... safeguarding agricultural production.” The message from this text is that building the Great Wall was an endeavour that the people had welcomed and which benefited the whole country, not least because it guaranteed safety of the areas along the route, facilitated business and trade, and stabilised agricultural activities. The decision to build the Great Wall, therefore, should not be simply interpreted as an emperor’s personal idea, not to mention that an emperor could also be lauded if he meant to keep the world safe and peaceful. Similarly, it can be argued that building the Great Wall was beneficial

to the general public and the whole world, not just the Emperor alone. Understandably, officials of past generations, so committed to building and reinforcing the Great Wall, were, on the one hand, carrying out the Emperor's order and, on the other hand, had fully appreciated the Great Wall's role in safeguarding the people's interests.

Secondly, one can reflect on the issue of manpower and resources consumed in building the Great Wall. The Great Wall was not built mostly with forced labour of civilians. The manpower was derived from three sources: the army, namely officers and soldiers guarding the frontiers; civilians, more accurately those who were recruited and famine refugees; and banished convicts. The segments made it clear that in rebuilding Zhenluying and nearby sections of the Great Wall, officers and soldiers guarding the border were a major workforce, with many having their names mentioned in the inscription.

Finally, it is now clearly known that the Great Wall was not built to make it easier to start wars. Pinggu was one of the nodes where the northern nomads and the Han nationality in central China intermingled. The very existence of the Great Wall solidified the border, balanced agriculture and animal husbandry, defused tensions between the nomads and the farming people, and established an interdependent, mutually beneficial relationship that facilitated trade and enabled access to necessities. All this helped ensure safe and comfortable lives for the people and allow cultures to blend and survive.

The remains of stone tablets have far-reaching significance because they stand as trustable witnesses who can relate the real story of the Great Wall, give a vivid depiction of its outstanding charm, and help people in future generations appreciate its lasting and profound values.

The Rule of Virtue Makes a Stronger Defence than Geographical Advantages

The bugle call fell silent in the border town. Shining spears and armoured horses were buried wayside. Dynasties changed overnight; homelands were left behind; and wartime intertwined with peacetime. Things within and outside the Great Wall were radically different from what they used to be. "The iron-hard gate towers soar into the clouds. I wonder how many warriors have fallen when fighting here." Blades of the bayonets, eroded, blunted, and rusted, are reminiscent of the blood shed by injured soldiers. Sa Dula, a poet of the Yuan Dynasty, wrote in his "Going by Juyongguan Pass," "Ah! How towering and lofty is the Juyongguan Pass! Why don't we go to Heaven and plead with the gods to disperse all those armoured soldiers? Without those bloody wars, we can forever live in a halcyon world, where men plow and women weave." Now, with the smoke of gunpowder disappearing into the distance, swords have been beaten into ploughshares, and ethnic groups within and outside the Great Wall live harmoniously like brothers. "The gate of the pass embraces a bright moon rising above the peaks; spring clouds are tinted beautifully when the dusk falls on the mausoleum" (as written by Chen Zilong of Ming). The pass and the wall have now become part of a sight that inspires awe with magnificent verdancy. As the Great Wall ceases to be a solid military defence, it starts to take a new, "softening" look as a symbol for integration and peace.

In Yuyang, at the heart of the chronic conflict between the farming and nomadic peoples, the rulers of the Tang Dynasty, who had never mobilised large-scale efforts to reinforce the Great Wall, established a county called "Huairou (to conciliate or pacify)." That is when Huairou, a place of strategic importance at the foot of the Great Wall,

entered the scene. The place was so named because the broad-minded rulers wanted to “conciliate people from a distance and pacify princes of vassal states.” More importantly, the establishment of the county also reveals the political vision of the Tang Dynasty to lenify and attract all people under Heaven as well as the shared aspiration of the Chinese people to coexist and integrate with other peoples. A thousand years later, when Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty made a stop at Gubeikou on his inspection tour, he noted, “Geographical advantages hardly make a good defence. A country is impregnable only when ruled by virtue.” His ideal way of defending a country lay in cultivating morality and appeasing the people, rather than relying on the military defence offered by the Great Wall.

The origin of “怀柔 (*huairou*)” dates back to ancient times. A portion of the *Book of Poetry*’s “Sacrificial Odes of Zhou” titled “Shi Mai” contains the text, “怀柔百神，及河峽岳 (*huairou baishen, jihe qiaoyue*, meaning to treat gods, rivers, and mountains with kindness).” Mao Chang annotated it, saying “怀 means to attract, to have someone come; 柔 means to appease, to pacify.” The text intends to say that all gods, rivers, and mountains should be treated with kindness. In *The Doctrine of the Mean*, one can find the text, “柔远人则四方归之，怀诸侯则天下畏之” (Appeasing the people in remote places, people from all directions will submit, and caring for the princes of various states, the people of the whole country will show their respect.).” “怀柔” was frequently seen in books authored later, such as the *Book of Han* and the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, and the combination “怀柔政策 (policy of conciliation)” was also invented. In short, “怀柔” amounts to the “恩 (kindness)” in another Chinese idiom “恩威并济 (alternate between kindness and severity),” both intended to attract and appease people. The ancient people’s strong desire for peace and tranquility is evident

in these sentences.

The entire history on the construction of the Great Wall testifies to a simple fact: The farming people made constant efforts to build or reinforce the Great Wall because it wanted to resist the invading nomads, fend off wars, and secure a situation supporting production and living. Though it is true that members of the Chinese Nation living along the Great Wall ran afoul of each other, their contentions were shovelled away in the end. It is the philosophy of “conciliation and pacification” that has underpinned the stability and unity of the Great Wall area and provided a driving force for the integration and symbiosis of the Chinese Nation. Sun Yat-sen said in *General Plan of the Founding of China*, “The Great Wall benefited later generations in a way comparable to how King Yu did by taming the floods.” The Great Wall was a true enabler of the orderly exchanges between, and the integration of, the farming nation and the nomadic nation, as the Guancheng strongholds along it became important venues for border trade and cultural exchanges. All this finally led to the marriage between the farming and nomadic societies, bringing about what Mr. Fei Xiaotong called the “Pattern of Pluralistic Unity of the Chinese Nation.”

With the advent of modern times, the Great Wall has lost its military value, but as an emblem of the national spirit, it has had an important role in Chinese history. The once towering passes and winding trails have been reduced to worn walls covered by mildew and moss. Weeds spread and crows flap in the twilight. “The steel, toughened and hardened, is now flexible enough to wrap round a finger.” As the Great Wall retires from the stage, the landscape now appears amiable. Today, the Great Wall provides a platform for farming and nomadic peoples to interact and engage in fields such as military, economy, and culture and empowers them to learn from each other and thrive together.





The Huanghuacheng Lakeside Great Wall (2017)

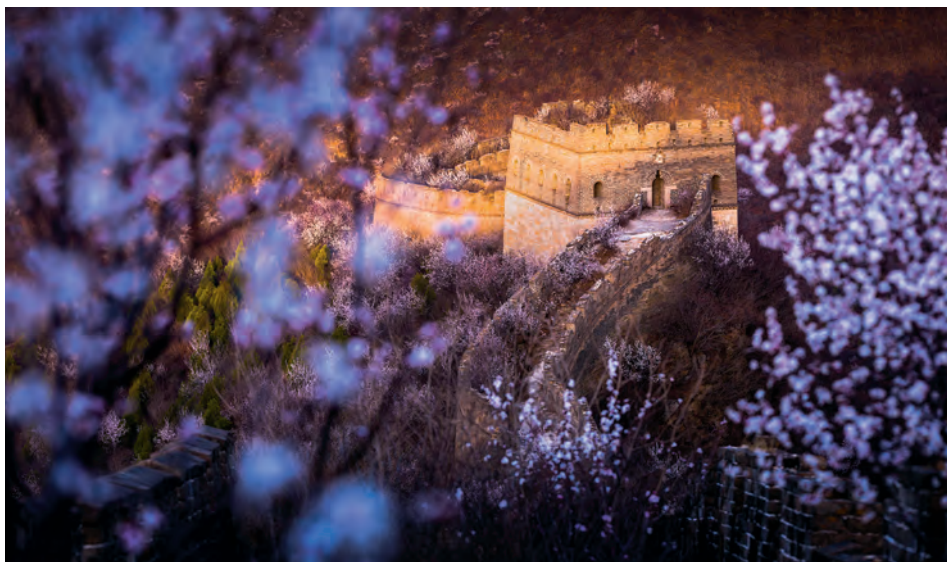
The Great Wall Sphere of Life

Obviously, the functions of the Great Wall are dynamic, meaning that in different periods, depending on different political, economic, social, and historical conditions, its functions can change and adapt, and the intensity and affected scope of these functions may also vary. On the whole, the Beijing Great Wall has moved away from fulfilling single functions, to providing overlapped functions, and finally to delivering comprehensive functions. People-centredness is an important reason for the continuous evolution of the Great Wall's functions and its constant vitality. Centred on people's lives, the military, economic, social, and cultural functions of the Great Wall have shown a trend of integration. As the glint and flash of swords dimmed, what the Great Wall left behind was not only a historical symbol preserving a social memory, but also a chronicle of customs, and lifestyles within and outside the Great Wall. They have been kept intact and are still prevalent, providing all the necessary elements to the Great Wall sphere

of life where multi-ethnic cultures mix, excite, and thrive.

Defence Line, Convergence Line, and Lifeline

Friedrich Engels noted in *Anti-Duhring*, "Every time a more barbaric nation makes a conquest, it goes without saying that it hinders economic development and destroys a lot of productive forces." The plundering nomads may obtain some means of life, production materials, labour, and production technology, which may give a temporary impetus to their social development, but they often regard plundering as "an endeavour that is easier and even more honourable than creative labour." This is not conducive to the undergoing development and improvement of the national productivity, socioeconomic structure, and social civilisation and will gradually lead to weak development. The effective defence offered by the Great Wall made it hard for the



The Wangquanyu Great Wall (2021)

nomads to seize and collect their loot. Even if dynasties in central China were eventually conquered, the strong resistance the nomads met would force them to forego their barbaric and backward rule and change their policies, which, as it turns out, hastened the conquerors' fate of being conquered by more advanced feudal civilisations.

Mr. Jin Yingxi pointed out in *The Great Wall of China as a Military Defence Line and Cultural Convergence Line*, “When central China’s dynasties were busy coping with the plundering nomads, the Great Wall mainly functioned as a military defence line or a barrier, but when the two sides, though still suspicious of each other’s motivations, engaged in trade on border markets, the Great Wall’s role as a convergence line became more prominent.”

If the Great Wall were to resist the invasion of foreign enemies, the officers and soldiers guarding the pass had to be supplied with military equipment and other provisions. The best solution given by rulers of past dynasties was to farm the land and relocate

people to the frontier. Texts such as “The river acted as a frontier barrier, near which 44 county seats were built and relegated officers were dispatched to fill posts there,” and “About 30,000 households were relocated from Beihe and Yuzhong,” in *Records of the Historian* evidenced that the First Emperor of Qin paid his attention to development of the border areas while building the Great Wall, and the successful practice of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty in “stabilising the Western Regions by employing the garrison troops to farm the land” was mostly adopted by later generations. If one looks at the entire history on opening up and developing China’s northern borders, we will be convinced that building and guarding the defence line of the Great Wall was one of the main driving forces behind the economic development of the border areas. Whether it be farming the land to reinforce the borders or setting up new counties or prefectures, such initiatives usually spread outward, with the Great Wall as the axis or as a backing. According to “Shihuo Zhi (Chronicles of Food

and Goods” in the *Book of Sui*, “On the edge of the border town, all arable land plots were cultivated.” Not only was fertile land farmed to become granaries, but alkaline soil and barren land (which was “desolate and lifeless due to the bitter cold border weather”) was also exploited to its extreme. To reinforce the Great Wall’s defence and, more importantly, to transport grains and troops fast, the dynasties made sure that an effective transport network was put in place in the border areas.

Border markets provided an important means for exchanges between areas on both sides of the Great Wall, and a few strategically important border towns were set up and thrived. The garrison-and-farm practice, transport network, and economic trade combined to make the Great Wall sphere of life secure and well-supplied. The defence line of the Great Wall effectively protected normal social life and enabled a peaceful and stable environment for the economic development of the border areas. The garrison-and-farm strategies, the transport networks, and the border markets helped enhance the defence provided by the Great Wall while fuelling the local economy.¹

The Great Wall, a Container, and a Magnet

Lewis Mumford, a famed American urban planner and historian, put forward the two metaphors of “magnet” and “container” in his theories about urban material culture. He regarded “magnet” and “container” as two essential functions of a city and looked at a city’s functions of attraction and storage from different angles.

The “magnet” refers to the attraction of a city, and it is the various social functions of the city that make it attractive. He noted, “Before the city became the permanent residence of Mankind, it was just a gathering place for ancient humans, who regularly returned to such places for sacred activities. Therefore, these places acquired the function of ‘magnet(s)’ before they acquired that of ‘container(s).’ These places can draw in non-residents to engage in emotional exchanges, seeking and finding fun. This ability, like economics and trade, is one of the basic criteria of the city, and also a testimonial of the city’s inherent vitality.” Mr. Mumford believes that when cities were in the embryonic stage, places for emotional communication and for having fun became the main magnetic poles.

When a city is a “container,” dispersed, unorganised social functions, social organisations and human beings are confined to a closed geographical environment and forced to form an urban complex. As the magnet part of a city is activated, the city attracts crowds and various organisations and becomes a living closed container. Within this complex, various social functions, organisations, and human beings that were previously isolated are now aware of each other and can interact as much as possible. On the one hand, the city, as a storage device, concentrates various social elements and provides a closed place where they can interact to the maximum extent. On the other hand, by materialising the spiritual culture, the value of the city itself has been improved.² Mr. Mumford believes that city walls, castles, writing, markets, and museums all play their part in helping a city deliver the function of storage.

An enclosing city wall is a prerequisite for a location to be called “confined,” and coupled

1 Cao Dawei. The Great Wall: Boundary Marker of Collision and Integration [J]. *Academic Journal of Zhongzhou*, 1993 (6): 114–120.

2 Chen Feixue. *Studies on the Urban Culture Theories of Lewis Mumford* [D]. Nanning: Guangxi University, 2017.

with the castle, it creates a closed complex. In describing the importance of the wall to the castle and to the ruler, Mr. Mumford believed that the city wall possessed the function of confinement and created a centripetal force within the confined space of a castle. The city wall, acting as a military defence, significantly boosts both citizens' sense of safety and their loyalty to the ruler in the castle.

Military settlements along the Great Wall were not only military organisations responsible for safeguarding the territory, but they also served as a military buffer zone, providing a relatively stable social environment for economic development and population growth and a distribution centre for trade and cultural exchanges. If one were to consider the military function of the Great Wall as a "container," offering a somewhat confined space for two different civilisations, then derivative social functions such as trade, transport, and agriculture in nearby areas work as the "magnet," attracting people from within and outside the Great Wall to gather, interact, and intermingle. Thanks to the relatively stable social environment afforded by the "container," the two different civilisations were able to deeply engage with each other and understand each other better, which in turn promoted agriculture and commerce. The Longqing Peace Negotiations in the Ming Dynasty ushered in a long spell of peace in the Great Wall area, when "the army was not alarmed by southward invasions and the border residents were spared from cruelty of slaughter." With wars being rare, the Ming regime saved huge amounts of money, which would otherwise be spent on moving troops, and was able to improve people's living standards.

As mutual exchanges deepened, the feudal civilisation, now in an advanced state, was like a huge magnet, drawing in nomads and inspiring them to imitate. Prosperity in areas along the Great Wall was almost comparable

to that of central China, as documented by Chen Renxi, a Ming scholar, who wrote, "For sixty years, merchants have gathered in areas along the Great Wall, keeping people well-supplied and free of anxiety. So there seems to be no real difference from central China." When their animal husbandry saw rapid improvement, the Mongolian tribes also sharpened their planting skills by learning from central China, eventually ending their simple animal husbandry structure. The Mongols were also gradually accustomed to the Han customs. Lady Sanniangzi is an example in point. She married three kings throughout her life, controlled the army, and oversaw the affairs of envoy markets. An ardent admirer of central China's highly developed feudal culture, she loved red satin Han costumes with lion decorations, and "every time she prayed before the Buddha, she wished she could live her afterlife in China."

Society, Order, and Integration

Historically, the Great Wall was more than a long, sturdy wall; it enhanced military defence and ethnic integration at the same time. The Great Wall sphere of life was a blending of culture, economy, and social life among multiple ethnic groups. Various construction activities within the sphere, especially the construction and operation of public services based on daily needs, were carried out on the basis of regional cooperation and with the goal of achieving benefits for all parties involved. Within this sphere, ethnic groups within and outside the Great Wall interacted, learned, and were exposed to each other's influence. By mixing with others, they had fulfilled the social function of win-win cooperation, exemplifying diversity in unity of the Chinese Nation. This is best reflected in how the social order was built. Building social order is a critical issue that



The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2019)

needs to be addressed during the development of any civilisation. It is also an issue faced by various political forces within and outside the Great Wall, as it has a direct bearing on economic and social development. Resolving the issues involves providing residents along the Great Wall with a relatively stable living environment and production conditions.

Integrating interests is the most basic and most important of all the Great Wall's social functions. Only when the interests are consistent can there be coordination in structure and behaviour and a common social life. The Great Wall of China played an important role in ensuring maximised interests of all entities within and outside its boundaries, and this is best seen in how it maintained the peaceful and stable environment required for economic and social development along its route. The situation of the Great Wall area evolved depending on how the power of farming regimes stacked up against that of nomadic forces. The existence of the Great Wall provided a foundation for stability and for

efforts to seek a peaceful solution to conflicts of interest. From struggle to negotiation, it was easier for regimes within and outside the Great Wall to express and balance their interests through negotiation. On the basis of safeguarding the interests of both parties, they sought an institutionalised compromise to achieve a win-win result and a good order where different stakeholders benefited and coexisted. In any society, people can hold different values, but through negotiation and cooperation, they are likely to strike a balance or learn to tolerate differences when it comes to expressing interests.

By integrating norms, the Great Wall showed how its social functions could promote development. Norms exist because values need them. A systematic and coordinated system in place can internalise norms into a common code of conduct that governs the behaviour of society members, thereby maintaining a certain social order. The numerous passes along the Great Wall were also important ports for transport and trade, which spawned border trade

markets in the surrounding areas. These markets grew into frontier towns of differing sizes, testifying to the prosperity and development of the northern economy while securing the important position of the Great Wall area in economic development. Even after China's economic centre of gravity shifted southward in the Southern Song Dynasty, the status of the Great Wall area as the centre of China's economic exchanges remained unchanged. The Ming Dynasty implemented the garrison-and-farm strategy and the tea-for-horse trade system, standardising and promoting large-scale economic ties and social exchanges along the Great Wall as well as accelerating the development of the northern region.

Building the Great Wall expedited the integration of local social structures. Society is a multi-structured system. The stronger the heterogeneity of society, the higher its differentiation; the more complex the multiple structures, the more important the role of functional integration. The nomadic and farming regimes are two highly heterogeneous forms of civilisation, with conflicts being the most obvious evidence. They were separate from but also connected to each other in the Great Wall area, together forming a complex and diverse social state. Every nation or regime has its own values and norms, but communication, interaction, and connection inevitably occur during the development process. The structure of society will change as a result, and a new social structure system will coalesce. This is what the theory of "structure subject to function" is intended to mean. Ethnic integration did not materialise out of thin air. Ethnic groups that lived in the same area for a long time achieved integration in the process of exchange and interaction, and the Great Wall provided a relatively stable geographic space for this. The Great Wall can be called a corridor, and when connected with the local

economy, society, and environment, it became a complex and comprehensive open system. Therefore, the Great Wall of China is not only a symbol for national history and culture, but it also represents a development area with strong practicality. The Great Wall area consists of a series of towns and villages that have the Great Wall as their axis. It promoted urban and rural development, and many towns and villages have continued to benefit from it to this day. In a sense, the development of the urban system along the Great Wall is also the result of its structural integration.

Nationality, Religion, and Temples

"While the Ming Dynasty was keen on extending the Great Wall, the Qing Dynasty kept itself busy building temples." As the Ming regime collapsed, Qing rulers were determined that the policy of conciliation should replace further efforts to reinforce the Great Wall. In a discussion with his ministers over foreign invasions, Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty said, "To govern a country, the emperor must address its problems at the roots; he should not rely solely on the protection provided by the country's favourable geographical positions or other defences. The original Great Wall was built by the Qin. Later, the Han, Tang, and Song dynasties renovated it, but weren't these dynasties all afflicted by border issues? By the end of the Ming, Emperor Taizu of Qing led his forces and moved straight in, meeting virtually no real resistance." He added, "The best way to defend a country, therefore, lies in cultivating virtue and appeasing the people. When the people are content, the country is secure at the foundation, and its borders are unassailable. This is what is meant by the idiom 'A united people is like a solid wall'." He then decided that the Great Wall would never be reinforced or extended in the future.

At a later time, outside his temporary imperial palace in Rehe, Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty built the famed Eight Outer Temples, including the Anyuan Temple, modelled on the Ili Temple on the riverside of the Ili River; the Puning Temple, modelled on the Samaya Temple in Tibet; the Temple of the Potaraka Doctrine (also called Putuo Zongchengzhi Temple), modelled on the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet; and the Xumifushou Temple (Temple of Sumeru Happiness and Longevity), modelled on the Tashilhunpo Monastery in Xigaze, Tibet. Qing rulers built religious or recreational venues for the upper class of Mongolian, Tibetan, and other ethnic groups. There, they would grant interviews to leaders of ethnic groups living on the borders, hearing what they had to say in the hopes of securing their own rule and pacifying the border areas. The Eight Outer Temples epitomise the integration of ethnic cultures and are symbolic of the Qing approach toward ethnic affairs – it sought to tighten its grip on rule by controlling religion and thinking. With the scented mist from the temple being a perfect screen to their complicated political motives, military actions were superseded by common worship, and shared values came into play to bring people closer.

Temples are places for ethnic cultures to intermingle, where religious values are employed to guide the integration of spirits and mind-sets of ethnic groups. As a result, a virtual Great Wall can be built to link people's minds and harbour their spiritual aspirations. Temple cultures did not thrive along the Great Wall for apparently no reason; rulers built these temples to appease and pacify the people. Soldiers building or guarding the Great Wall and residents living nearby had more than their fair share of war-induced suffering and departures. For them, peace, health, and freedom from hunger and cold mattered most,

and they craved, more than people from other places, for a religious belief to support them. The Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties did not impose any single religious belief; they chose to be tolerant. This allowed people to embrace and stick to their own beliefs. More often than not, officers, soldiers, and the general public were from different places and ethnic groups, and they brought with themselves diverse lifestyles, allowing Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism to coexist and develop in harmony. To meet the spiritual needs of soldiers and their dependents, a great number of temples, all with their distinct features, were built in passes, barracks, castles, and a few villages. Experts believe temples were more popular in these places than in others.

According to *Temples of Pinggu, A Brief Survey of Temples in Pinggu*, and other literature, a number of villages, including Jiangjungan, Zhangzuo Village, Dongshangying, Zhongxin Village, Heishuiwan, and Hongshimen of Jinhaihu Town and Shangying, Xiaying, etc. of Zhenluoying Town, all had temples in the old days. One village even had over 20 temples, and in some villages, it was said that one could meet “two temples for every step.” The most typical one is Emeishan Village at the Emeishan camp. North of the village, the Ming Great Wall winds its way along the mountains, and there is the Emeishan camp, with dilapidated walls. This is documented in *Chronicle of Four Towns and Three Passes*. The village, adjacent to the Great Wall, had more than 20 temples of various sizes, including Taoist temples such as the Sanyi (Liu Bei, Zhang Fei and Guan Yu who swore an oath in Peach Garden in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) Temple, Temple of the King of Medicine, Master (Guan Yu) Temple, Fire God Temple, Horse God Temple, Zhenwu Temple, Purple Cloud Temple, Temple of General Wudao, Dragon King Temple, King



The Cloud Platform at the Juyongguan Pass (2021)

of Insects Temple, Temple of the Mountain God, Three Eternity Emperors Temple, Temple of the Goddess, and Jade Emperor Temple and Buddhist temples such as the Xingshan Temple, Goddess of Mercy Temple, Dizang Temple, Bodhisattva Temple, etc.

As far as the temples in the Great Wall area are concerned, the gods enshrined there are more or less related to the Great Wall cultures. There are temples dedicated to education, contrary to people's conventional belief that such temples are not closely related to military camps. However, in Mentougou District, it is known that the only two Confucian temples were built in Yanhecheng, the military command centre in western Beijing, and Zhaitang, an auxiliary town situated to the left of Yanhecheng, where troops garrisoned the palace. Additionally, Taoist Wenchang Temple and Kuixing Pavilion were also built in Yanhecheng and Zhaitang Town, where scholars prostrated themselves in worship. As it turned out, most of the officers who were transferred from other places to Yanhecheng to serve as *shou bei* (town officers in charge of defence affairs) or *du si* (officers in charge of flood control and military discipline) were versed in both literature and martial arts. Some started out as soldiers or guards, but most of them passed imperial examinations and, when they were assigned to defending the border or stationing somewhere, paid equal attention to military and education. They not only built temples, worshipped the gods, and offered sacrifices, but also took initiatives in setting up schools, to ensure that teachers were respected and that education was promoted. Zhang Jingwei in the Ming Dynasty, when serving as a *shou bei*, donated his salary to a free Yanhekou school to show his support, and Xu Lin, a *xun jian* (inspecting officer), immediately after he arrived at Zhaitang, relocated the Pingluoying Government Office,

which had occupied a Confucian temple for 42 years, and repurposed the Confucian Temple for free schooling. These officers and generals, with their well-informed decisions and actions, greatly promoted local cultures and economic development.

In comparison, the temples related to the God of War have particularly prominent positions in military villages on the border. In addition to the official gods of Taoism, four types of secular gods are also worshipped: the first type is natural gods, such as the Thunder God, Marquis of Wind, etc.; the second type is heroic gods or cultural gods with obvious human characteristics, such as Guandi (Guan Yu), Wenchang, etc.; the third type is patron saints, such as the God of Doors, Kitchen God, City God, Land God, and Mazu; and the fourth type is trade-related or functional gods with specific purposes, such as the King of Medicine and God of Wealth. The army was expected to protect homelands and the country, to fight, and to win battles, so soldiers in the garrison often worshiped the God of War. Among them, the "Master Temple" (also known as the Guan Gong Temple or Guandi Temple) was the folk name for the Guan Yu Temple. Guan Gong, admired for "his lofty morality soaring to reach the clouds," has also been widely known as the Martial God of Wealth and Righteous God of Wealth among Chinese people groups. Multiple Guan Yu Temples were built along the Great Wall, as soldiers regarded Guan Gong as the God of War, and local governments looked to him as the protector against threats or disasters. Most Guandi temples are located in villages, with the only exception being the Guandi Temple beside the Tianjin Pass in Mentougou District, which faces east and stands alone to the south of the pass, not being near any village or town. The temple, built by officers and soldiers guarding the pass, is majestic and has an aura absent from other temples.

The couplet at the door reads, "Thoughts and feelings are as glorious as constellations; morality and righteousness are as lofty as the Heaven." On the inner wall of the temple, there are murals depicting Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei, shining examples revered by the guarding officers and soldiers, who themselves upheld loyalty, worshiped heroes, strove to protect their homeland, and aspired to perform immortal feats. The initial reasons to build this temple are therefore obvious: on the one hand, the soldiers hoped to have the loyalty and courage of Guan Yu and achieve fame for loyalty and righteousness; on the other hand, they hoped that they could be blessed by the Martial Saint, fight bravely, and be rewarded by health and peace. In addition, in temples such as Linggong Temple, Temple of the Goddess, Zhenwu Temple, Ehuang Temple, etc., officers and soldiers stationed in villages found venues to express their respect for loyal ministers and established generals, yearning for victory in war and longing for their families and hometowns, while local people found support for their kind, generous deeds.

A number of temples, as in other places, seem omnipresent in the Great Wall area, but some temples only exist in this area. For example, Taoist temples such as Guandi temples, Dragon King temples, King of Medicine temples and Mountain God temples and Buddhist temples such as Goddess of Mercy temples and Bodhisattva temples are more typical and exist in almost every village. By contrast, Horse King (Horse God) temples are unique to the Great Wall area and not found anywhere else. This can be explained by the border custom of "having people raise horses," which made Horse God worship even more widespread in the Great Wall area. Horses raised in garrisons had different purposes from those raised in other places such as rural areas, where the animals were used for plowing fields, carrying loads, or grinding mills.

In the Great Wall area, which was the gateway to the capital and its environs, mules and horses were often used for military purposes. That was an age when transport was underdeveloped and horses were an important means for transport and warfare. They were comrades-in-arms of the cavalry. Soldiers' survival counted on those horses. So did the victory of a war. People felt grateful and even worshiped horses to the point of deifying them. In ancient China, before the army set off, the sacrifice to horses was an important part of the military ritual and also the most distinctive ceremony. This sacrificial ritual for the Horse God dates back to ancient times, as "Huangyi" in the *Book of Poetry*'s "Daya (Greater Odes of the Kingdom)" can prove:

The engines of onfall and assault were gently plied, Against the walls of Chong high and great;

Captives for the question were brought in one after another;

The left ears of the slain were taken leisurely.

He sacrificed to God, and to the father of war, Thus seeking to induce submission;

And throughout the kingdom none dared to insult him.

The assault engines gently were vigorously plied, Against the walls of Chong very strong;

He attacked it, and let loose all his forces;

He extinguished its sacrifices, and made an end of its existence;

And throughout the kingdom none dared to oppose him.

As soldiers and local people offered sacrifices to and worshiped the Horse God, they were praying for the protection of gods, hoping to perform immortal feats, and bless their families in triumph.

The cultural memory of the temples, corresponding to that of the Great Wall, bears witness to the existence of religious beliefs.

For thousands of years, an extremely large and ever-expanding range of gods made inroads into and were revered in various temples throughout the villages and towns, having an impact on people from every walk of life. The general public lived with “tangible” gods and also the invisible mysterious powers these gods possess. The reason why they could still be needed, especially as objects used for utilitarian purposes, is that essentially, they offered a way whereby people voiced their aspirations for auspicious and peaceful lives.¹ The temple culture along the Great Wall thrived, with the army and soldiers active in building the temples. The reason for this is twofold: first, it met the spiritual needs of the soldiers and the general public and the requirements arising from their production and life; second, it was a natural outcome of the integration and symbiosis that were happening in the areas along the Great Wall area. In the temple culture, the soldiers and the local people found a place where their spiritual beliefs could align and converge; in temples, they found a bond that tied together their interests and glory.

During the course of the Great Wall’s evolution, religions and temples have been used as a tool to influence and guide the masses, carrying forward the tradition of “benefiting and appeasing all the people” and playing an indelible role in helping people of all ethnic groups within and outside the Great Wall in their pursuit of peace of mind and peaceful coexistence and in the ultimate realisation of integration.

Fortresses, Frontiers, and Border Trade

Throughout history, the capital of a country has usually been where its political centre is situated, and the primary goal of military operations has been to protect the political

centre. Depending on where capitals are located, strategic areas of a country can vary. During the Qin and Han dynasties, the political centre was in the northwest, and the roads leading to the northwest were prioritised to have barriers and forts, which later became frontier fortresses. Since the Liao and Nüzhen Jin dynasties, Beijing gradually established itself as the central city in the north, and the Great Wall assumed a more prominent role in guarding the city. The emperor Zhu Di relocated the capital so as to defend the border areas. The capital adjoined the Great Wall, and the passes abutted the border. The border culture thus became an integral part of the capital culture, and border trade enjoyed its heyday.

The border fortresses in Beijing have made a name for themselves since ancient times. Precipitous passes in northern and northwestern Beijing are among the best known, with Juyongguan Pass being the most important and the epitome of Beijing border passes. The *Spring and Autumn of Master Lü* (aka *Lüshi Chunqiu*) asserts, “Juyong ranks among the top nine passes under Heaven.” The *History of Song* and the *History of Nüzhen Jin* both list Songting Pass, Gubeikou, and Juyongguan Pass as “key fortresses in central China” and state that the “passes are adjacent to the capital and easy to defend against the enemies. Together they guard a wall that runs some 1,000 *li* from west to east, connecting some of the steepest terrains.” As dynasties changed and warfare increased, Juyongguan Pass became one of those Great Wall spots that commanded most attention of rulers. Gong Zizhen, poet of the Qing Dynasty, noted, “Juyongguan Pass is like a pillow of the capital” in “An Essay on Changping Prefecture.” As the cultural and historical heritage of Juyongguan Pass grew deep, the

1 Xin Zhisheng, Random Thoughts on Chinese Folk Faiths [N]. *China Ethnic News*, 2006-05-23(6).

border culture it represented has served as a fascinating component of Beijing's history.

Border culture defined the Great Wall frontier fortresses. Frontier fortresses, as places where all ethnic groups mixed, had very important political and military statuses. Juyongguan Pass is located in Changping, which is not only part of a major road of transport, but also the place where the Ming imperial mausoleums are located. This determines Changping's unique layout as a pass-based town: the town was built around the pass, so the pass connects different parts of the town and is never divided by them. The special border culture of Changping had deep interactions with other surrounding cultures: by coexisting with the thriving temples, it promoted the integration of people of different ethnic groups and beliefs; by stimulating literary minds, it inspired them to create splendid poems celebrated by later generations; by connecting with the mausoleums, it provided a means for people to express aspiration for eternal tranquility; by echoing the stone carving culture, it preserved the remains of history; by providing a venue for hunting, it offered a window on the special complex of ancient emperors and royals regarding sacrificial activities and political patrolling; and by sharing the same root with revolutionary culture, it enriched the modern history of wars of resistance against aggression.

As ethnic conflicts morphed into integration, the border culture sped up the transformation of the Great Wall's identity from a barrier to a trade channel; as the Great Wall border evolved into a transfer station for goods from different parts of the country, the prosperous border trade brought huge changes to the frontier fortress areas. The once formidable fortress was now filled with money shops, hotels, and dining halls, and merchants and travellers flocked in.

The border markets ("tea-for-horse markets") were important evidence of how far the border trade of the Great Wall had travelled. Tea was a necessity for nomads, while horses mostly came from grasslands. On the tea-for-horse markets, produce from farming areas such as tea was traded for products from livestock raising areas, most typically horses. Such tea-for-horse exchange can be traced back to the barter trade method of feudal society, over which the Government presided, and the term later referred to trade in general. A frontier fortress was a pass that protected people in wartime, but a means for border trade in peacetime. The flames of war brought difficulties and great uncertainty to border trade transactions. Camel bells rang, people formed a stampede, and they knew that there was always someone who trudged near the pass, blazing trails and sustaining the border trade to keep commodities flowing. Through these tea-for-horse markets, and at the cost of the blood and sweat of camel drivers crossing the frontier, economic and cultural exchanges between farmers and herders within and outside the Great Wall were maintained, promoting the development of the area and bringing income and, more importantly, peace to the border residents.

People gathered in frontier fortresses along the Great Wall to avert or prepare for war. Officers and soldiers grew, aged, and died there, dedicating their entire lives to the fortresses. When warfare subsided, commerce boomed. Merchants and travellers trudged and had their footprints buried in sand, opening up channels for dialogues and exchanges while relaying stories of the border and yearnings of the people to distant corners of the world. In this way, they were keeping alive the unique border culture, which was deeply rooted in Great Wall lifestyles.





Majuanbu in Yangyuan County (2020)

Villages and Homelands

“People arrived at Youzhou and Bingzhou when they were young. They kept fighting as the years piled on,” wrote Wang Changling, a renowned poet in the Tang Dynasty. Generation after generation, people rushed to the border of the Great Wall to defend their homelands and the country; officers and soldiers gathered there, turning their humble camps into full-fledged villages and towns; caravans came and left, breathing life into villages at the foot of the Great Wall. Officers and soldiers were garrisoned here for ages, watching wild geese migrating back and forth. Nobody knew how many years elapsed before these people started to accept this foreign land as their homeland.

The beacon fires went out, but the villages have survived. Today, many people, feeling attached to the Great Wall, have followed in their ancestors’ footsteps and are trying to live their lives to their fullest extent in this promising area.

From Settlements to Villages, From Hometown to Homeland

Living in a compact community provides a key driving force for the formation and development of human civilisation. Humans in such a community developed, utilised, and transformed nature, creating a living environment and forming settlements. Civilisation was carried by the long river of history and eventually spawned villages and cities. As a settlement based on blood relations and geographical relations, a village has its own scope and space for activities. Culturally, villages are where people of the same ethnic group gather and are expected to sustain kinship. Villages are confined, conservative, and limited to a specific geographic location, and they represent a perfect overlapping of two spaces: (1) the physical space at a specific geographic location; (2) the non-physical social space defined by blood relations, geographical relations, and even kinship. The earliest city

discovered by archaeologists so far dates to 3,000 BCE, which means that it had taken humans some 10,000 years to go from villages to cities. Could human beings from 5,000 years ago imagine how today's cities would look? On the long journey from village to city, the footprints human civilisation left when marching forward are remarkable.

The Western urban-rural system is a typical binary, confrontational relationship that originated in ancient Greek city-states. In this relationship, the city has a strong organisational form and historical consciousness, while the countryside is limited by way of life and local knowledge; the city is the centre of power and civilisation, while the countryside is on the fringe and subordinate to the city. City-state still represents a mainstream view.¹

Unlike in the West, villages throughout Chinese history are an important tool and historical starting point for building home and the country as an integral whole. Villages are not only the “solid evidence” of the developmental history of Chinese civilisation, but also the “living evidence” of the origins of Chinese civilisation. In China's village system, urban and rural areas constitute a complete structure around farming civilisation, and the two are independent entities. The gist of “Tribute of Yu” in the *Book of Documents* can be summarised as follows: King Yu tamed the floods, founded the Middle Region, and established a conscript and taxation system underpinned by agriculture and based on grains.² This economic structure, agriculture-oriented and focused on land distribution, led to a homeland-style rural model that combined nature and clan. The mode of living, which

echoed the traditional Chinese outlook on the harmony between humans and nature, set the stage for a splendid farming civilisation and long-standing settlement practices. Throughout the long history of Chinese civilisation, villages have nourished the history and culture of the Chinese Nation, as they provide abundant, wholesome, inclusive, and stable nutrients to sustain civilisation and cultural development.

People who till land for a livelihood appreciate soil better. Agriculture is different from nomadism or industry in that it derives required resources from land. Nomads live by water and grass and are always on the move, and people employed in industrial sectors can choose where to settle and can move without hindrances. Still, those who till the land, because they can move neither the soil nor the crops that grow on it, have very limited mobility as if they have, as an image, planted half of their body in the soil.³ The advent of agriculture left a distinct mark on villages, village clusters, cities, and countries that appeared in later times. The fact that people lived together as a small ethnic group and the economy was self-sufficient made farmers very dependent on the land under their feet. With these geographical restrictions, China's villages evolved into a rural society where people were born, grew up, and were buried in the same locality. This has accelerated the establishment of the country from villages, allowed Chinese territory to move from decentralisation to unity, and enabled the reorganisation and integration of early human society from blood relations, through geographical relations, and then to civilisations.

A farming civilisation flourished on the fertile land of central China. Whether it was

1 Peng Zhaorong. A New Look at the Village—Home: A New Anthropological Perspective on Traditional Villages in the Post-Pandemic Era [J]. *Northwestern Journal of Ethnology*, 2021(1): 168-177.

2 Hu Binbin and Deng Chang. The Origin and Development of Chinese Villages [J]. *Seeker*, 2019 (1): 151-160.

3 Fei Xiaotong. *Rural China* [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012.



The bastion at the Qiangzilu section of the Great Wall (2021)

during the Warring States strife of feudal lords or when there were unified dynasties, a peaceful and stable enclosed space was a necessity to protect production and life. When the nomads went south to invade, wave after wave of people went all the way north, garrisoning the border and guarding the frontiers. Far away from their hometowns, they built new homelands in mountain gorges and formed border fortresses, recognising and integrating Chinese society based on blood relations, geographical relations, and, finally, civilisations.

The officers and soldiers who were guarding the border came from all corners of the country. Many ethnic groups gathered at the foot of the Great Wall, and more and more people migrated there to engage in production activities. With the passage of time, solitary passes or fortresses where soldiers lived gradually evolved into settlements. People took root at the foot of the Great Wall, multiplying and spreading their civilisation. They came because of warfare but did not leave when wars ended. Today, with the Great Wall still standing atop the mountains, the villages along it have nurtured descendants of the border guards, who continue to thrive, maintain their blood-based connections with the wall, and keep alive its immortal spirit. Their dialects have drifted away into oblivion; the foreign land has been accepted as their homeland; and a new culture – the Great Wall culture – has germinated and formed in silence. The Great Wall has been the reason why this area has thrived and why people have kept flowing in, and the people, while garrisoning and gathering here, have brought vitality and vigour to this wall that would otherwise look too solemn and stern.

Because of the Great Wall, there have been concepts of “within” and “outside.” “People are said to have hometowns on both sides of the Great Wall, but have you ever wondered how long the Great Wall is?” These lyrics from the song “Long Indeed is the Great Wall” performed on Spring Festival Gala in 1994 seem to be a distant and belated response to those from “Ballad of the Great Wall,” another beloved song first released in the 1930s: “The Great Wall is said to be 10,000 *li* long, and my hometown is on the other side of the Great Wall.” The mighty river of history relentlessly surges, but this will not change the strong affection the Chinese Nation retains toward their homelands, where their ancestors have lived for generations.

The Chinese character for hometown (乡) originally meant “toward.” Though one’s life journey is rugged and long, childhood is always the starting point. The world that one sees at first sight – which to him or her is the entire world – is the homeland where he or she is born and raised.¹ The lines, “Hu horses are neighing in the north wind, and Yue birds nest on a south-facing branch,” and “The tree is thousands of feet tall, but the leaves it sheds fall towards the roots,” are both about yearning for one’s native land. “The beacon fire has gone higher and higher. Words from my hometown are worth their weight in gold,” and “Looking to Chang’an in the distance, countless verdant mountains are all I could see,” are depictions of hunger to “go home.” “It is like I have spent my entire life in hostels. Where is my hometown in which I might settle down?” and “I wish to say, ‘Where I can find peace of mind? My hometown is there!’” are forms of longing. Farming, defined by “work from sunrise and rest at sunset,” has created the basic paradigm of farming civilisation,

1 Ke Ling. “Rural Complex” [EB/OL]. (2014-09-29). http://www.wenming.cn/book/szjy/201409/t20140929_2209166.shtml.

while the production model, defined by a “small peasant economy,” highlights the characteristics of farming civilisation such as cultivating land and passing on one’s heritage from generation to generation. The household registration system in the feudal regime and the clan-based affection advocated by Confucianism have worked together to sow nostalgia and attachment to “home” in people when they engage in farming for a long time.¹ Over time and amid changes of space, the close relationship between Nature and people has therefore been written by “native lands” into the genes of this great eastern country.

Each place has its own way of supporting its inhabitants, and family affection is passed from generation to generation. Home provides the most natural and purest foundation on which one can develop a personal spirit, emotions, and interests. Thinking of one’s native land brings back “memories” of mountains, rivers, houses, dialects, and customs of one’s hometown. It also evokes the deepest affections for home and family. “The cooking smoke is seen rising in the distance. Waiting for my return at the door is my young child” (Tao Yuanming, an Eastern Jin poet). “Carefully she sews and thoroughly she mends, dreading the delays that will keep him late from coming home” (Meng Jiao, a Tang poet). Home is where one is protected from hunger and cold and feels embraced by joy and love. Both “home” and “town” lie at the heart of the most fundamental and profound feelings about family and country. Time elapses, and the world changes. One’s affection toward one’s

native land has evolved into a longstanding complex and has become an essential building block of the spiritual homeland underpinned by Chinese civilisation.

It is true that cultivating land is not possible without people, but the Chinese people are never afraid of migration. Those determined to leave their hometowns are not held back by the conventional belief about the Chinese being “attached to native land and unwilling to move around.”² Whether it was in the campaign promoted by imperial rulers to help swell the Sichuan population with Hu-Guang people; during the people’s spontaneous movements such as “Go Westward,” “Sail South,” and “Brave the Journey Northeast”; when people sought refuge or fled disasters; or when regime changes or social reforms took their toll on society, the Chinese Nation coalesced and built new homelands in mobility. The Great Wall and the villages at the foot of the Great Wall are the outcome of this coalescence.

“People ten leagues apart have different habits, and when hundreds of leagues apart, they have different customs.” On the sides of the Great Wall, there were two major society types: agricultural and nomadic. It was because of the Great Wall that completely different modes of production and life were intertwined, attracting people within and outside of it to conduct exchange and make a living. The villages that assimilated these two completely different cultures became an organic part of the entire Great Wall settlement area.³ In the Ming Dynasty, massive efforts were mobilised to build the Great Wall sections in Beijing, with

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- 1 Gao Shengui, Cultural Reflections on the Rural Complex of the Chinese [J]. *Journal of Jilin Engineering Normal University*, 2018,34 (7): 78–80.
 - 2 Luo Xiaoxiang, Rural Complex and Urban Attachment: A Discussion on Chinese Urban and Rural Outlooks Since the Late Ming Dynasty [J]. *Jianghai Academic Journal*, 2020 (4): 195–204, 255.
 - 3 Chen Zhe and Zhang Jian, “Protection of Garrison Settlements Along the Great Wall and New Countryside Planning and Construction – Using Changping’s Changyucheng Village, Changping as an Example [J]. *China Ancient City*, 2009 (4): 36–39.

the regime setting up numerous settlements along the route for defence purposes. As the Qing army broke through the passes, most of the fortresses were rendered barely functional. They were not reduced to ruins, not least because of the successful garrison-and-farm strategies pursued by previous dynasties, but evolved into villages as they are today. Now, in addition to the remainder of the wall body, towers, and other facilities for people to pay tribute to, the unique historical and cultural villages along the Great Wall are important objects that preserve the cultural and geographic characteristics of the areas along the Great Wall.

Ancient Garrison Villages Against the Sunset

The Great Wall villages are like organic, living systems. Though most of the passes and the camps are now dilapidated, the villages have borne their names and tried to carry forward their heritage. They remind us of the rich and longstanding traditions of the farming and nomadic peoples and bring back vivid memories about the border military culture, which the Tang poet Du Mu captured with the verse, “The time of returning home is uncertain, the border is not yet peaceful.”

Situated along the Beijing section of the Great Wall are 36 towns and more than 260 villages, including 165 folk villages on the Great Wall Cultural Belt. In the five Chinese traditional village directories published by China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development since 2012, a total of 22 traditional villages in Beijing have been listed, 17 of which fall in the areas along the Great Wall. Mentougou District has 12 such villages, the most in all the involved districts; Miyun District has three; and Changping District and Yanqing District each has one.

Those that feature the Great Wall’s border cultures include Cuandixia Village and Yanhecheng Village (both in Mentougou), Changyucheng Village (in Changping), and Gubeikou Village and Linggong Village (both in Miyun). These villages, like other villages along the Great Wall on the outskirts of Beijing, spread along the mountains’ orientation, not only exhibiting distinct local architectural features, but also showing a unique layout of a natural defence system. Together, they give an account of how the Great Wall has evolved, bear witness to the relationship between the village appearance and the construction of the Great Wall, and fully preserve the customs and cultural charms of the areas along the Great Wall.

According to the *Journal of Chinese Historical Geography* by Gu Zuyu, a geographer in early Qing, “A pass is an avenue and a gate is a path; camps are where troops are stationed and stockades are where they are lined up for defence.” Over the years, the passes, gates, camps, stockades, and castles have evolved into villages and began to carry emotional connotations. For example, people are accustomed to referring to the outside of a pass entrance, which faces invading enemies, as the pass, and the inside of it, which faces troops, as does the gate. Therefore, “outside the gate” and “inside the gate” are phrases used when one thinks from the perspective of our side; by contrast, “inside the pass” and “outside the pass” are what is used when expressing a point from the perspective of the other side. As a result, new connotations have been given to “pass.” The villages there were also named using such terminology. For example, most of the villages along the Great Wall that contain “屯 (*tun*, to station or quarter troops),” “营 (*ying*, a camp),” “寨 (*zhai*, a stockade or stockaded village)” or “城 (*cheng*, a town or city)” in their names have something to do with

their history of guarding the border or building frontier stockades.

Gubeikou Town of Miyun District is home to the Gubeikou section of the Great Wall, which has long been reputed as the “Key to the Capital.” Gubeikou, as the biggest pass leading to the North China Plain on the Yanshan Mountains, happened to be where multiple battles were fought in the Liao, Nüzhen Jin, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. It was a bloody battlefield in wartime, but also a channel for trade and cultural exchanges in peacetime. People came and mixed before a natural village came into existence. In the place that is known as Gubeikou Town today, the original Guancheng stronghold has been preserved quite well, with precious military remains and unique folk cultural resources.

Jiangjungan Village of Pinggu District is a traditional village, located under the Jiangjungan section of the Great Wall that was hailed as the first line of defence in eastern Beijing. Historically, this typical northern traditional village was a choke point for different parties. There was the Zhengguanshui Gate on the Great Wall, and the pass was flanked by two pier forts garrisoned by troops. Most of the Jiangjungan Pass was destroyed by war, with the Guancheng foundation and the General’s Rock being the only remains.

Bohaisuo Village of Huairou District is an important ancient village at the foot of the Great Wall. The *Bohaisuo* (“Bohai Bureau”) was an important military command organisation in the Ming Dynasty. As some of the Ming imperial mausoleums were built and the Great Wall nearby was extended or reinforced, the Ming regime set up a *Qianhusuo* (thousand-household bureau of defence), complemented by the Bohai fortress. The *Qianhusuo* was later named *Bohaisuo*. When the Ming Dynasty collapsed, *Bohaisuo* as a name has been in good standing to this

day. Today’s Bohaisuo Village, abutting Shuitangzi in the west and Mutianyu in the east, is a unique sight embraced from the Great Wall.

Cuandixia Village of Mentougou District has a distinct geographic feature described by this line: “Its back is like a dragon head immersed in water, and its front, a golden toad looking up to the moon.” It was so named because of being situated under the Ming pass, Cuanli’an Gate (aka *Cuantou*). According to official history, bent on strengthening the defence of Tianjin Pass and the Cuanli’an Gate, the Ming Dynasty sent troops to garrison here. As the soldiers and their families settled down and flourished, villages were formed. Today, villagers bearing major surnames there are most likely to be descendants of those soldiers. In ancient times, Cuandixia Village, surrounded by mountains on all sides, was very perilous, but because of being somewhere midway on an ancient route connecting Tianjin Pass, it was also strategically important. It was also one of the military passages linking the capital to the border, the main road leading to Hebei and Inner Mongolia, and a booming town with inns for commodity trading on the Jingxi Gudao (ancient roads in the west of Beijing). Cuandixia Village is home to one of the best-preserved, precious mountainous courtyard buildings in northern China. In 2003, Cuandixia Village was included in “the first set of Chinese historical and cultural villages” by China’s Ministry of Development and the National Cultural Heritage Administration. In 2009, it was voted the “Most Beautiful Village in Beijing.”

Changyucheng (“Changyu Town”) Village is located in Changping District. “长峪” is sometimes written as “常峪,” both pronounced *chang yu*. Changyu is a valley on the lower range of the Taihang Mountains. Down the valley, there is another mountain pass, which



Changyucheng (2021)

in the Ming Dynasty became a strategic point for defence. The need to maintain the defence resulted in the establishment of Changyu Town as a supporting military facility of the Great Wall. Together with the nearby Baiyang Town, the towns of Hengling and Zhenbian (both in Hebei) constituted the military defence system west of Juyongguan Pass, which was the last line of defence in northwest Beijing. After the Ming Dynasty, it ceased to be a military fortification, and the guarding soldiers moved on. Later, the Qing government took over, using the open space inside and outside the town to build residential houses. Changyu Town has thus turned into a traditional village in the mountainous area of the northwestern Changping.

“The watchhouse almost invisible amid the beacon fire’s smoke, soldiers dismounted to camp at sunset,” wrote Nalan Xingde, a famed poet of the Qing Dynasty. Other traditional villages named after military passes, gates, camps, stockades, and castles include Zhenluoying Village, Huanghuacheng

Village, Baimaguan Village, Chadao Village, Baiyangcheng Village, etc. They were all important strongholds along the Great Wall, possessing different levels of military status and bearing witness to the garrison-and-farm, cultivate-and-fight military culture. There are also many traditional villages that have close links to the history, culture, and ethnic exchanges in the areas along the Great Wall, such as Guajiayu Village and Taihou Village in Pinggu District.

Guajiayu Village derived its name from a story about Yang Yanzhao (or Yang Liulang), a general of the Northern Song Dynasty. Legend has it that Yang Yanzhao, being a loyal and brave general, once imprisoned captives of the Liao army in a ravine within present-day Guajiayu Village. He took off his armour, hung it up on a tree, and took a nap. This place was later called “挂甲狱 (pronounced as *gua jia yu*, literally meaning prison with armour hung).” In the Ming Dynasty, camps were set up, and troops were stationed there. Because the Chinese character “狱 (prison)”

was considered a taboo in military speech, the place was renamed “挂甲峪,” with the same pronunciation. As for Taihou Village, there has been a widely circulated anecdote about Xiao Chuo. Xiao was born there and later became the prestigious Khitan heroine and Empress Dowager Chengtian. Xiao’s original name was Xiao Yanyan, which was mentioned often in the county’s chronicles as well as in folk legends of Pinggu. Admittedly, oral transmission adds a mystical touch to the tale and may have served a particular political purpose, but the legend about this place being where Empress Dowager Xiao was born has been relayed to this day and cited as the origin for Taihou Village’s name.

From stories about the ancient military towns or castles to folklore, one can clearly see that traditional villages under the Great Wall are inextricably linked with the latter. Some of the villages vanished as time went by, but this does not negate the fact that it is these villages, which were formed because of people and which gathered around the towns, that have carried the rich history of the Great Wall and passed on intriguing stories about it.

Children Able to Read Fire Signals, Women Skilled at Sewing Flags

After passes on the Great Wall were built, officers and soldiers were dispatched to them to defend the border. They lived in these places long enough to turn them into military villages. Mostly composed of military households or their descendants, these villages were quite different from other villages in terms of lifestyles and customs. When defending the border was a regular part of daily life, villagers refused to just be content with the monotonous regulations of barracks. Instead, they began to seek variety in their entertainment, and thus rich, military-flavoured frontier cultures flourished along

the ups and downs of the Great Wall. Today, through the folk customs and practices passed down in these villages, we can still take a peep into how they looked ages ago.

Under the Great Wall in Mentougou, west of Beijing, most residents of military villages can sing one or two sentences of the *shanbangzi* (mountainous clapper) opera. This is because troops were once stationed here to defend the border. In the Ming Dynasty, in order to defend against the Mongolian cavalry and the Later Jin Dynasty’s army, inner sections of the Great Wall were built in western and northern Beijing as the last line of defence to protect the capital. At that time, the regime “transferred soldiers from the south to guard the north, and encouraged their dependents to accompany them,” sending troops to guard the passes on the inner Great Wall.

Baiyu Village is one of the existent military villages. Situated in the northwest of Baiyu Village is Tianjin Pass, an important pass in the inner Great Wall in Beijing. The garrison troops were transferred from Henan. When soldiers guarded the Pass, their family members settled down at the foot of the nearby mountains. Their descendants increased and eventually turned the places into villages. Baiyu Yangge Opera is a local small opera that was introduced by soldiers guarding Tianjin Pass from their hometown in Henan. Following its introduction to western Beijing, the opera drew on local dialects, folk songs, and other opera types, which began to take on a Zhaitangchuan flavour. The opera, aptly named “Baiyu Yangge Opera” because it only exists in Baiyu Village and was set up by descendants of the guarding soldiers, celebrates a history of over 400 years. Baiyu Yangge Opera is somewhat linked to Yuan Opera. For example, the repertoire items such as “Cool Breeze Stockade,” “Fiery Steed with Red Mane,” “Story of Gowns,” “Story of Reed Flowers,” etc. were all written

by famous *zaju* (poetic dramas set to music) masters of the Yuan Dynasty. Many lyrics and arias in Yangge Opera works adopt the same writing styles as *sanqu* (a type of verse) and *xiaoling* (a type of *sanqu*) popular in the Yuan Dynasty, and the existing *qupai* (names of tunes) also suggests influence from the Yuan *zaju*. Such links to Yuan opera have prompted experts from the Beijing Institute of Traditional Chinese Operas to praise Baiyu Yangge Opera as a “living fossil of opera culture.”

When building and garrisoning the Great Wall, soldiers and their dependents flocked to it from all over the country, and military villages were formed. “Food is the first necessity of the people,” as the Chinese proverb goes. There seemed to be a burst of enthusiasm for reclaiming wasteland: not only did the aboriginal people but also family members of soldiers living in the military villages have to till land. A large share of soldiers’ pay depended on how well they did farming, with one soldier tilling up to 50 *mu* (approx. 3.33 ha.) in some cases. Most of the fields were in the mountainous areas, standing higher with available running water, so they were called *wang tian tian* (literally “fields looking to the sky,” meaning fields with harvests depending on rainfall). So, both soldiers and civilians had to count on the climate for yields. Because soil moisture and meteorological conditions could vary with locations and the likelihood of droughts or floods might also fluctuate, there was a need to pray for rain, and because officers and soldiers came from different parts of the country, the villages they lived in had their own unique ways of doing so. Every year on the 22nd day of the sixth month of the lunar calendar, Cuandixia Village would offer sacrifice to the Dragon King, beseeching him to grant good weather and a “bumper” harvest. They honoured the Dragon King in a ceremonious and grand way: in front of the

Dragon King statue in the grand temple, a whole pig was offered as sacrifice; all villagers knelt on the west side of the temple; and an elder villager would preside over this service. First, the lead officiator would plant the incense before kneeling and “kowtowing,” viz., bowing several times. As the big bell in the temple was struck, another officiator would read the sacrificial text, praising the virtues of the Dragon King and praying for good weather. Finally, a letter to the Dragon King was burnt as a gesture to send the people’s wishes to the Dragon King’s heavenly abode. Huanglingxi Village is located deep in the mountains, with little flat land. Leveling the land and creating terraced fields proved extremely difficult. Water was as expensive as oil, and a drought could aggravate the situation there. All this made praying for rain a serious routine in the village. Local squires would organise villagers to beat gongs and drums and carry the “Seat of the Goddess” to the mountain spring in Qingtai Temple’s Dragon King Alley, where they would kneel and worship. They would first wash the goddess’s face, present offerings, and then throw a gourd into the spring to let it fill itself. It is normally not easy to get an empty gourd floating on the water to fill itself, but that was the time to show piety. People had to kneel for a long time until it was filled to capacity. Shihe Village had a distinctive way of praying for rain: they slaughtered and skinned a sheep, and then the skinned sheep was placed on the table, on its own feet, as a gesture to worship Heaven. Other times, they brought a slaughtered sheep to the mountain temple, where they would kneel and worship.

In addition to temple fairs and festive activities, military culture was also seen permeating folk activities. The game *paomacheng* (town of galloping steeds) is one of them. Children are divided into two teams and placed in two columns that are



The military bastion at Ximalin Great Wall (2019)

more than 10 metres apart. Those in the same team hold each other's hands and stand facing the other team. Team members have to shout slogans used in fighting or in phrases typical of messengers near the Great Wall and run and collide with members from the opposing team, trying to win themselves more team members. Such games simulate breaking passes and guarding towns, are a contest of strategy, courage, and power, and vividly reflect influences from the Great Wall as a form of military defence.

The military's traces remain visible in these places, as local women and children all seem versed in military knowledge and village customs bear marks reminiscent of past warfare. Hundreds of thousands of heroic soldiers arrived, bringing their homes here while guarding the frontiers at the feet of the Great Wall. The scenery of their hometowns could not be moved, but the customs have long been integrated within the border passes. It is

because of the unique humanistic history of the Great Wall that the traditional villages are glistening like a constellation of stars scattered on the border, providing the spiritual backing for the displaced soldiers from over the years.

Lingering Memory of Hometown, Brighter Futures

"How strange is this arrangement of my fate! I have a beautiful Chinese name, but that is actually a transliteration of my Mongolian name. My Mongolian name sounds more beautiful, but I never got a chance to use it... I'm conversant in the histories of many countries, have been to many countries and cities, including India and Nepal, but I've never visited my hometown," sighed Xi Murong, a poet from China's Taiwan, who had never been to her hometown on the steppe until she turned 40. She has two hometowns that are closely related but are nevertheless drastically different.

Even if her parents keep telling her about the places beyond the Great Wall and the steppe, Xi, born in Chinese mainland's Chongqing, could only dwell on her yearnings for her two hometowns in writing.¹

Memories of one's hometown are inefaceable throughout one's life, especially for those who have spent the rest of their lives in other places. The Great Wall of China, as a transition in terms of both human and natural geography, was also a point where agriculture and grassland forces engaged and converged. Neither side could rule the area forever, nor when long-term confrontations persisted, could the Great Wall not do without soldiers and civilians. When there was no war, people living there reclaimed fields, and on-the-go merchants, travellers, and vendors were magnetised there, making life rather lively. A few more years later, this new homeland became the native land of those new arrivals. Geese passed by, and another year elapsed. Yearning for the hometown and surges of nostalgia provoked with each passing year. "Over a cup of turbid wine, I fondly remembered my hometown thousands of *li* away. I have no plan to embark on a home-bound trip, as I have not yet made my fame," Fan Zhongyan, the prestigious statesman and writer of the Northern Song Dynasty wrote in one of his poems. Every time the moon climbed over the wall, the border-guarding officers and soldiers would stand and gaze in the direction of their hometown, their minds filled with pensive thoughts. Over a few cups of wine, they shared their past stories with each other. Every time a new group of soldiers joined or relatives and friends visited, they would first be excited and then quickly overcome by perpetual frustration,

as described in the verse by the Tang's poet Wang Wei, "As you come from my hometown, you should know what happened here." They were unaware that when they were eager to know anything from back in their hometowns, the land they garrisoned was quietly changing into a new native land that they would never forget in future days.

These villages now seem to have been left behind by time. As the beacon fires went out in the Great Wall, cities thrived, and people's mindsets evolved. "Uncivilised" and "backward" have been the words people have come to use to label their native lands. Cultures of native lands do not necessarily evoke nostalgia today, and people have found themselves in a dilemma of bidding farewell to while hankering for their native lands, both negating and grudging the loss.² The villages along the Great Wall have witnessed the departure and migration of people in batches, evoked people's nostalgia, and produced echoes that are slowly dying away. Ever-changing modern society has reorganised stable life patterns and relationships of traditional societies, and past stories can hardly be signposts in the new world. What fate awaits the villages that lie alongside the passes, ditches, and stockades?

The oldest and deepest roots of the Chinese Nation are not beneath cities, but buried in these villages. Judged from aesthetic orientation and values, as reflected in unique folk cultures, folk customs, folk arts, etiquette, and music, village culture has laid a solid foundation for the cultural history and national spirit of Chinese civilisation. As part of the country's drive for modernisation,

1 Yu Xiujuan, Hometown Inside and Outside the Great Wall – Xi Murong's Dual Homesickness [J]. *Journal of Inner Mongolia Minzu University*, 2012, 18 (6): 28–29.

2 Chen Yueyi, Lost Homeland, Inescapable Nostalgia: Modernity Anxiety of Documentaries on Nostalgia [J]. *Central China Academics*, 2021, 13 (1): 233–240.

the countryside has taken firm steps toward urbanisation. Some villages have disappeared during the course; some have thrown away “backwardness”; and some have neglected ancient scenery and customs. It is hard to leave one’s homeland, and once one leaves, it is even harder to return. To some extent, nostalgia or hometown memory is imagined or artificially constructed. Intelligentsia are behind that effort to construct nostalgia. Nostalgia points to the past, to one’s homeland, and to one’s place of origin. A breeze can ripple nostalgia. It is as light as a fluff thread, but it is also as heavy as the Great Wall upon the shoulder.¹ Does the Great Wall also carry such nostalgia?

A native land is a place where people live and thrive, a place where they want to rid themselves of “backwardness” and “bustle.” When crowds of visitors climb the Great Wall, some villages become animated, but some remain quiet. After these people get recharged and leave, these villages withdraw to loneliness. The villages at the foot of the Great Wall have gone from being a new home to a native land. They are accustomed to the clamour of iron-clad hoofs and drums; they have witnessed the changes of dynasties; and together with the Great Wall, they have become an integral part of Beijing’s history as a city and capital. The Great Wall will not move. Villagers might have left, but the Great Wall has not inched.

Villages are looking for the habits that were pushed aside and seeking ways to shake off backwardness. They hope people come back and stay. Tourism should never be the primary value of a village, so simple, unspoiled villages are not tools for profiteering. Only when there is a sound and authentic culture will people really appreciate the mountains and the

water and cherish the nostalgia. The purpose of a village is, first of all, to retain hometown memories in people’s minds, which is the centripetal force of national cohesion, the roots in the earth, and the spiritual homeland for 5,000 years of survival and thriving. “It is like a small postage stamp, pasted with the most ardent expectations; like soft soil, supporting the most delighted footprints; and like a tiny bird’s nest, sending off a ‘high-flying’ child.” Being nostalgic is not about going back to past days of poverty and backwardness, not about fearing that people born in a place will never return, but about cultivating and retaining memories about the valleys, streams, brick walls and tiles, passes, villages, stockades, and castles, and about translating them into spiritual values that will be carried forward to future generations and never be erased. In this way, the future is never too distant to be seen, and homelands are illuminated by the lights from the future.

When each Chinese New Year approaches, cooking smoke hovering over rooftops seems to resurrect those villages that have been dormant throughout the past twelve months, giving people a vague hope.² The Great Wall of China, as the reason behind the rise of these villages, has been a source of unfailing support and has witnessed the rural complex of people living here. A definite answer may evade people as to where the villages of the Great Wall are heading, but here is something that is absolutely certain: whenever countries and homes are there, people have homelands; as long as the Great Wall is there, those villages will not vanish; and if nostalgia still tugs at people’s heartstrings, they will still live with hope and purpose.

1 Shi Yanxia, Wandering Hometowns [J]. *Contemporaries*, 2019 (10): 20–23.

2 Xiong Wansheng, Future Forms of Village: Somewhere Between Farmstead and Community [N]. *Study Times*, 2014-09-29(4).

The Common Heritage of Humankind

Extending from the east and the west and linking the north to the south, the majestic Great Wall of China meanders thousands of kilometres and has defied millennia of trials and tribulations. It is like a giant dragon tossing flames over the lofty mountains and transcending ages, lifting China's vast territory and securing it a spot among world civilisations. Through changes in the world and vicissitudes of life, the Great Wall has long been transformed from a physical military work to a cultural symbol deeply cherished in Chinese civilisation. It instils in the minds of the Chinese people the patriotic spirit of unity and solidarity, the national spirit of perseverance and self-improvement, and the Zeitgeist (spirit of time) of love for peace and openness.

In 1908, William Edgar Geil concluded his hike from Shanhaiguan Pass to Jiayuguan Pass and published the world's first monograph on the Great Wall, *The Great Wall of China*. In 2008, the centenary of Edgar Geil's visit to the

Great Wall, the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 were ready to open. The *Great Wall Revisited* photo exhibition, curated by William Lindesay, was inaugurated in Beijing. The two Williams' dialogues, transcending time and space, engaged Great Wall fans from all over the world. Today's Great Wall is commanding the world's attention with its newfound values. It is speaking to the world with an assertive voice about the essential qualities of the Chinese Nation.

The Great Wall is ancient but also contemporary; it belongs to China but also to the world.

"He Who Has Never Been to the Great Wall Is Not a Hero"

"He who has never been to the Great Wall is not a hero." For the Chinese, the Great Wall symbolizes perseverance and courage. This verse written in 1935 by Mao Zedong, the great leader of China, has become the best slogan



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2019)

of the Great Wall in contemporary times. Badaling, Shanhaiguan Pass, Juyongguan Pass, Jiayuguan Pass, and other sections or locations of the Great Wall have long become must-visit places, while other scenic spots developed along the route also attract a multitude of Chinese and foreign tourists. The Badaling section of the Great Wall has always been the best known. Badaling, representing several sections of the Great Wall with magnificent views and “best-in-class” construction, was officially opened to tourists in 1958, making it the first section of the Great Wall repaired and opened to the outside world after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Being the world’s most famous scenic spot to receive state guests, it is China’s prime destination to entertain individuals and delegations with government bodies and an important window to international exchange. Since the first day of opening, Badaling has received more than 200 million Chinese and foreign visits, including more than 500 heads of state or government and world leaders.

The history, reality, and future of the Great Wall are interlinked. Its functions are always renewed, its culture being passed down from generation to generation. Arguably, the most precious thing embedded is the rich philosophy about state governance celebrated in Chinese history and culture. At the heart of this philosophy is people-centred values advocated in ancient China. When one stands on the towering wall and ponders over it in a contemporary context, one becomes convinced that being people-centredness is the best interpretation of the centripetal force and cohesion of the Great Wall. In parallel to the main course of Chinese civilisation’s evolution over thousands of years, the Great Wall has harboured and supported the people’s yearning for a better life. The core philosophy that the Chinese Nation adheres to and the driving force that keeps the Chinese Nation moving forward show what can happen when such values are brought into full play.

The Great Wall is the crystalised diligence and wisdom of the working people as well as

a testament of the Chinese Nation's strong determination to defend national unity. As the Chinese people and the peoples of the world see it, peace is in line with justice and will inevitably be supported and commended by the people; in contrast, creating national divisions and undermining national unity are blatant violations of the people's will and will be condemned in the history books. The Chinese Nation built the Great Wall and tempered a spirit the Great Wall: "self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-reliance." This spirit has provided a strong impetus for the Chinese people to unite, forge ahead, and rejuvenate the Nation. It also is in keeping with the development philosophy of other world civilisations today. With the successful holding of the international horticultural expo and the Olympic Winter Games at the foot of the Great Wall, the Beijing section of the Great Wall will provide a marvellous window on its profound heritage, fully demonstrating its values in the Chinese Nation's political, historical, ecological, economic, trade-based, and social aspects. Its inclusive and all-embracing stance is an open invitation to the world and projects China as a country coming into the spotlight by constantly forging ahead and advancing.

Back in 1754 CE, before any humans entered space, English antiquary William Stukeley speculated, based on the sheer extent of the Great Wall on the tellurian, that "the Chinese Wall, which makes a considerable figure on the terrestrial globe, and may be discerned from the Moon." Although this was disproved more than 200 years later, the words have been a vivid slogan to promote the Great Wall around the world. "The Great Wall," as a highly influential cultural icon, has penetrated into every aspect of life in China and around the world. Searches for the term "长城" on China's trademark website return more than 4,000 registered trademarks, owned by

businesses in food, hospitality, automobiles, medicine, and other sectors. The Great Wall, now more than a historical and geographical landmark, is starting to be influential in modern culture and life, both at home and around the world.

The Great Wall, the Terracotta Warriors and Horses, and Chinese Characters

Albert Einstein once said, he knew how important matter could be and that was why he chose to study physics, but what he found behind his study of matter were spiritual questions. The Great Wall is no longer just an ancient work for the Chinese Nation. It has become an important cultural symbol in China's efforts to promote its civilisation, values, and points of view to the outside world. Among all ancient civilisations, China does not claim the honour of having the longest history or the earliest writing, but among the top four ancient civilisations, it is the only country with an uninterrupted civilisation system and arguably may also be the one that has approached history and cultural inheritance most seriously.

Under the rule of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, China "built the Great Wall, paved thoroughfares, baked terracotta warriors, and unified the writing systems." These efforts prepared for the unification of ancient China where "carriages ran on tracks of the same width, people wrote with the same characters, and the same moral standards were adopted nationwide" and accounted for the dissemination of Chinese civilisation in subsequent centuries. Foreign experts once claimed that China is blessed with "three treasures," namely the Great Wall, the terracotta warriors and horses, and Chinese characters. The Great Wall is a symbol of the

nation's great construction ability; the terracotta warriors and horses are a symbol of great organisational skills; and Chinese characters serve as a symbol of great cultural traditions. The three treasures also made their appearance at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 in a section dedicated to showcasing China's brilliant civilisation and profound cultural heritage. To some extent, many believe these three treasures are clear epitomes of traditional Chinese culture.

To rejuvenate the Chinese Nation is to revive Chinese characters and the fine traditional culture that they embody. "Characters are the foundation of Confucian classics and the very start of benevolent Government. They provide a vehicle whereby predecessors pass on culture and knowledge to later generations and descendants learn from the predecessors." During the development of the Chinese civilisation was forming, Chinese characters acted as the primary means of communication, storing and transferring Chinese information while crystallising the inherent wisdom of the Chinese people. Throughout the political, cultural, and economic life of the entire Chinese Nation, Chinese characters have played an irreplaceable role.¹

Among the world's five oldest writing systems, viz., the cuneiform tablet signs used by the Sumerians, the hieroglyphs used by ancient Egyptians in the Nile River valley, and the Mayan hieroglyphs used in the Americas have ceased their widespread use, and the Indian Sanskrit has long lost its currency in modern society. Chinese characters are the only

exception. Chinese characters, representing combinations of pronunciation, form, and meaning, have stood the test of time. The Chinese character system has complemented its "native civilisation" and been reinforced by it before becoming a crucial underpinning of the unity of the country. Liang Qichao, a social and political activist during the late Qing Dynasty, once remarked, "Chinese characters have been in use for thousands of years, so they are powerful enough to assimilate and unite people bearing all kinds of foreign elements." As the longest-lived and most dynamic writing system in the history of world civilisation, Chinese characters are known to have a "world view" defined by inclusiveness and openness, which has had a profound impact on the history of neighbouring countries, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, and contributed to the formation of the "Sinosphere." An Zijie (Ann Tse-kai), a politician, industrialist, and linguist in China's Hong Kong SAR, once noted, "Among the more than 100 writing systems worldwide, Chinese characters have played an unparalleled part in advancing humankind's civilisation."²

As one of China's first heritage sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses have been hailed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" and one of the greatest discoveries in the archaeological history of the 20th century. The site, as the largest burial ground of all imperial mausoleums in China, captured significant military and political scenarios at the time. It marks the first large-scale use of clay sculptures in place of living persons as funerary objects in China's burial history, an

1 Lu Yi. Chinese Characters – A Historical Monument of Chinese Civilisation [N]. *Guangming Daily*, 2007-04-06(9).

2 Li Minsheng. Ann Tse-kai's Discussion About Chinese Characters Being the Roots of Chinese Nation [J]. *Culture of Chinese Characters*, 1996 (1) : 21–25.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2020)

unmistakable gesture of human liberation.¹ The craftsmen managed to create vivid characters by modelling them on the body shapes and facial expressions of real officers and soldiers. These characters, embodying traditional Eastern military strategy while exhibiting aesthetic aptitudes outperforming their peers from other parts of the world, afford a rare glimpse into the social development and changes occurring during the initial unification of China and provide a snapshot of Chinese civilisation's development.

After the Great Wall was announced as one of China's earliest world cultural heritage sites, it began to be known by people all over the world. Today, the Great Wall is a distinct symbol of China and the Chinese Nation as well as an important window for the world to appreciate the historical and cultural value of Chinese civilisation. As a great miracle crafted by the Chinese working people, the Great Wall came first in the "New Seven Wonders of the World" list published in 2006. The World Heritage Committee gave this verdict: the cultural and artistic value of the Great Wall is comparable to its historical and strategic importance.

The construction and maintenance of the Great Wall in Beijing has spanned multiple periods, resulting in a large number of historical sites and cultural artifacts. The tangible Great Wall bore witness to Chinese civilisation's pursuit of systematisation and order. Its being great lies not only in the fact that it is one of the few officially recognised world wonders or that the construction is masterful and the cultural artifacts are precious, but also that its evolution provides a parallel to the history of ethnic integration. This turns the Great Wall into an intangible cultural symbol that has

stood the test of time and still resonates with people. China's fine traditional cultures and values, represented by the Great Wall, Chinese characters, and Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses, have not become irrelevant with the passage of time; they are still active players in Chinese civilisation, carrying forward the national spirit of "harmony with the world" and people's aspiration for "universal peace" while setting out to write a new chapter in the history of human civilisation.

The Longstanding Great Wall, a Masterpiece on the Landscape

Chen Danqing, a Chinese-American artist, writer, and art critic, in his *Long Surprise* written after he read William Lindesay *My Great Wall Life*, said, "The Great Wall may be the most surprising and most unfathomable among the world's super-scale ancient remains." William Lindesay saw himself as the primary British figure protecting the Great Wall of China. As a long-distance runner facing a long and ancient wall, he felt there was no other choice but to hike on it. That is what he himself wrote when describing his intentions of climbing the Great Wall in his book *Alone on the Great Wall* after he finished the feat in 1987. When he first arrived at the Great Wall, he believed that it was not only the greatest human-made structure in the world, but also a priceless treasure of humankind. Lindesay was not the first foreigner to visit the Great Wall; neither was he the only one who has worked to protect the Great Wall. Still, the Great Wall has followed him from his very childhood to the day he arrived in China and started picking up litter on the Great Wall, and then to the day he established the international association

1 Zhao Shizhen. Chinese Civilisation and the Core Values of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses of Qin [J]. *New West*, 2009(5): 23-124.

“Friends of the Great Wall.” Today, William Lindesay remains committed to the cause of the Great Wall, and his protection of the Great Wall has been commended internationally. The Chinese media hailed him as “the most successful foreign explorer of the Great Wall,” and the Chinese government presented him with a Friendship Medal. Even Queen Elizabeth II awarded him Order of the British Empire, the highest honour of the British royal family. He is known to have said that the Great Wall was so immensely charming that his love for it would not perish for the rest of his life and that devoting his entire life to protecting the Great Wall was a worthwhile cause. Indeed, it is in dire need of such protection.

The ancient Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus (330–c. 395 CE) once mentioned that the Kingdom of Seres in the ancient East was surrounded by high walls. Later, Western missionaries in the Ming Dynasty gave more detailed accounts after seeing the Great Wall with their own eyes. The Great Wall has since become the most distinctive and important symbol of this Eastern country. In 1998 and 2002, Mr. Dong Yaohui, Vice President of the Great Wall Society of China, served as a guide for US presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush when they visited the Great Wall. Overwhelmed by this impressive defensive work of human history, one of them posed a question that had intrigued many people: “Why did the ancient Chinese people spend so much manpower and resources to build the Great Wall?” Mr. Dong replied, “The Great Wall was built to establish an order in the area where farming and nomadic peoples intermingled. The Chinese built the Great Wall to establish

peace, because the people who built the Great Wall wouldn’t want to climb over it to fight battles.”

“The Great Wall stands awe-inspiring to this day,” said Zhang Ying, a prime minister during the Qing Dynasty. The spectacle is a quiet meandering upon China’s expansive countryside. The Nation’s 5,000-year history spans numerous dynasties, and on more than one occasion, its society has teetered on the brink of collapse. Still, the national character defined by love for harmony and constant self-improvement has sustained the Chinese culture and kept it thriving,¹ and though laws, rituals, and cultural practices have evolved with the tides of time, the Chinese people’s outlook that has been held dear remains unchanged. To them, harmony with the world and courtesy to others are of paramount importance. From ancient times to the Middle Ages, large military defence facilities were built in many areas across the world, but if one were to look at the time spent in construction, the service length, the complexity or scale, and the distribution, coverage, or the influence, the Great Wall is a nonpareil.² Today’s Great Wall, however, is less of a fortification built by rulers of feudal dynasties and more of a spiritual symbol of the Chinese Nation, deeply ingrained within the people’s heart and connecting its past, present, and future. This shift is meaningful in that today’s China is no longer looking at the Great Wall as it used to be, just as it is no longer looking at itself as it used to be. Instead, China is weighing its own development and impact from a future perspective and in a global context, and as a result, how the Great Wall will be viewed and

1 Ma Chao. The Significant Value of the National Spirit of Cherishing Harmony and Self-Improvement [J]. *Youth Times*, 2020(3) : 96–97.

2 Zhu Yaoting, et. al. *The Ancient Great Wall — The Bond Between War and Peace* [M]. Liaoning Normal University Press, 1996.



The Panlong Mountain section of the Great Wall (2021)

projected will depend on the values shared by China and the world.

More than a century ago, weapon-armed ships knocked open the door of the “Celestial Empire,” allowing the farming civilisation, nomadic civilisation, and marine civilisation to collide for the first time on China’s territory. The solid walls weakened and fell in the face of artillery, and the galloping steeds were deterred by barrages. The trends of history were ruthless and unrelenting, sweeping away all obstacles in the way, but the people who were genuinely concerned about their country and the whole world were not disheartened. The Chinese people, who are good at drawing lessons from history, have never abandoned their humanistic responsibility for all humankind, their pursuit of self-improvement, and their yearning for a better life, and from the ruins, they have built new “great walls” to inspire the Nation and the world at large.

The Great Wall culture, spanning two millennia, is part of the five-millennium old

Chinese civilisation. Both have profoundly influenced and shaped the Chinese people’s way of thinking, aesthetic consciousness, and emotional expression. They are instrumental to shaping and defending the Chinese people’s simple and ideal world view – “the world is all humankind’s world” – and facilitate formation of the pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese Nation. The history of world civilisation can reveal that human society is a society of multiple civilisations and that human history is like a breathtaking scroll, vividly depicting the exchanges, mutual learning, and integration of different civilisations. From Xuanzang’s account in *Records of the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty* of the civilisations in Central Asia and South Asia to Karl Marx’s remarks on Eastern civilisations in his anthropological notes and Arnold Joseph Toynbee’s summary of 26 civilisation types in *A Study of History*, we can see that there has always been a path to construct humans’ space and time with civilisation diversity as

the nodes. From a longitudinal point of view, the “stepped” movement (using the scales of science and technology, ethics, and institutions) has resulted in the primitive civilisation defined by savageness, the farming civilisation defined by pastoral life, the industrial civilisation defined by machine production, and the information civilisation defined by artificial intelligence. From a horizontal point of view, whether one categorises civilisations into the river civilisation and the maritime civilisation or into the Eastern civilisation and the Western civilisation or distinguishes civilisations based on their geographical positions, what cannot be denied is that multiple civilisations have existed in parallel in the same time sequence and that this culturally prepares these civilisations to inspire, learn from, and advance one another.

“A public spirit will rule all under the Heaven when the great way prevails,” said Dai Sheng of the Western Han Dynasty in the *Book of Rites*. The world is the people’s world, which should be the “Society of Great Harmony” as advocated by Confucianism. “Great Harmony” concerns “all under the Heaven,” or in the entire world. It is a philosophy about world civilisation’s development that respects human existence, maintains human dignity, and protects human rights. It is in line with the Chinese ideas on ecology (“the unity of Man and Nature”), on politics (“harmony among all nations”), on handling interests (“unity of justice and benefit”), and on ethics (“kindness toward fellow human beings”) in China’s fine traditional culture.¹ These ideas about harmony and unity enable people from different races, regions, and countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds or following different

development paths to coexist and live in perfect harmony. On March 17, 2017, the concept of building a global community of a shared future was adopted in a UN Security Council resolution for the first time. This lofty ideal stays true to China’s history and cultures but represents an elevated understanding of the concept of peace.² As a symbol of peace, the Great Wall has witnessed China’s development and run through the entire length of Chinese history, helping nurture the ideal for “the whole world as one harmonious community.”

Civilisations only vary beside each other, just as human beings are different only in terms of the skin colour and the language used. No civilisation is superior to others. The history of world civilisations indicates that every civilisation needs to advance with the times; long-term self-isolation will cause a civilisation to decline. The Great Wall of China is not a cultural watershed. The nomadic and farming cultures within and outside the Great Wall are organic components of the Chinese civilisation. There is no such distinction that one is superior and the other inferior. Today’s China is a natural outcome of the evolution of the two combined.

The erstwhile passes are still there, adding magnificence to China’s breathtaking landscape. When one looks at the Great Wall from a contemporary perspective, one finds that the spirit of the Great Wall and its multifaceted identity, while conveying the Chinese arts, the Chinese culture, and the Chinese values to the world, have become a shared heritage that binds the destiny of the peoples around the world and inspires them to build a better future together.

1 Tang Jian. The Whole World as One Harmonious Community—Analysis of the Era Connotation of a Global Community of Shared Future from the Perspective of China’s Excellent Traditional Culture [J]. *The South Journal*, 2021(6): 14–17.

2 Li Gerui. The Great Wall Is the Cultural Symbol of the Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation [C]. *Proceedings of the Symposium on Chinese Great Wall Culture*, ed., the Great Wall Society of China and Badaling Special Zone Office. Beijing: China Book Press, 2019: 75–79.



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2021)

An aerial photograph showing a winding river or canal cutting through a dense forest. The trees are in various stages of autumn, displaying a rich palette of colors including deep reds, oranges, yellows, and some remaining greens. The river is a light blue-grey color, and several small figures of people can be seen walking along its banks. The overall scene is a beautiful representation of ecological diversity and seasonal change.

Part III

The Ecological Beauty

The Great Wall is a poem engraved on the Earth and the most beautiful epic co-authored by Mankind and Nature.

The beauty of the Great Wall lies in its perfect combination of cultural and natural values. It originates in the ancient Chinese thought of “the unity of Man and Nature,” it reflects China’s traditional architectural aesthetics of “respecting Nature and following its laws,” and it embodies how the climate, geography and Nature have ingeniously left their imprints on human civilisations. Such beauty shows us the wonders and depth of Nature and makes us grateful for its nourishment. It also shows us its fragility and urges us to preserve natural balance and treat all beings as equals. The beauty of the Great Wall of China transcends time and space and runs through history and reality. Let’s find out more about the ecological beauty of the Great Wall with a broader vision and more careful observation.

Ecological Space on the Great Wall

When the world first began, there came the Sun, the Moon and the stars, hence the sky and the Earth. All beings came into life, including human beings. As Mankind began to think, our ancestors embarked on a long and hard journey of exploring the relations among the sky, Earth and humanity and the laws of the relations.¹ From time immemorial, the contemplation on the relation between man and Nature has accompanied the development of the Chinese Nation. Ancient philosophers observed and studied the movement of celestial bodies and geographical changes, and, through practicing, thinking and feeling, developed a cognitive system of man's relation with Nature and society centred on the world view of "the unity of Man and Nature." This, as the fundamental concept of traditional Chinese philosophy, is the underpinning ideology in the construction of China's

political, economic, military, literary, artistic, architectural and other sectors, leaving a profound influence on its ancient history and civilisation. Analysing the natural environment and the ecological space of the Great Wall and the ideas that go into its construction and development also reflects such an ideology.

In the Embrace of Mountains and Rivers

Through China's dynasties in history, the Great Wall was basically built on the ridges of the Yanshan Mountains, the Yinshan Mountains, the Taihang Mountains, the Helan Mountains, the Liupan Mountains, Qilian Mountains, and the Tianshan Mountains, as well as at the critical passes of their southern and northern hills close to residential communities. The walls were linked with natural barriers like mountains,

1 Lian Yuming, *The Six-dimension Theory* [M]. Beijing: China CITIC Press, 2015.

cliffs, ravines, valleys, rivers and forests to form a military defence line along which man-made fortifications and natural landforms complemented each other,¹ giving birth to the Great Wall's classic image of "snaking" up and down lofty mountains and deep vales in all its magnificence and sublimity.

Located at the northern end of the North China Plains with Yanshan Mountains running through it, Beijing is a natural barrier from the Central Plains to the northeast and the northern grasslands in Inner Mongolia, and also a natural boundary between the Han people and the ethnic minorities living in the north.² A close observation of the topography where the Great Wall is located would show that its direction, the size of structures and the materials used vary from the east to the west along the inner side of the Yanshan Mountains and the Taihang Mountains matching the different landforms. According to the administrative division, the sections of the Great Wall in the districts of Pinggu, Miyun, Huairou, Yanqing, Changping and Mentougou have distinct characteristics due to the varied local landforms. Though always sitting among the mountains, the different sections display different views because of the various conditions and features of the mountains. More importantly, the Great Wall has become an ecological conservation zone for Beijing and an important part of the northwestern ecological conservation zone in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei coordinated development scheme. It occupies a crucial position in the development of ecological civilisation in Beijing and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

Following the Laws of Heaven

For thousands of years, the Chinese have been searching for a way to get along with Nature properly and harmoniously. "Respecting the unity of Man and Nature and following Nature's course" is an architectural principle upheld by the Chinese from ancient times and also the most romantic architectural concept. It is demonstrated to the fullest degree in the construction of the Great Wall of China. Cai Yong, a renowned writer and calligrapher who lived at the end of the Han Dynasty, wrote that Nature has planted mountains and rivers and Qin and Han have built defence walls to separate people living inside and outside the borders. Over 2,000 years ago, ancient Chinese built the Great Wall on the basis of natural structures such as cliffs, ravines, valleys and rivers, taking advantage of local geographical conditions and dangerous spots to erect defensive fortifications.

If we compare mountains to the skeleton of the Earth, then rivers would be its veins. Proximity to both was an important consideration in the siting of the Great Wall.

There is rich vegetation on both sides of the Great Wall in Beijing. It is recorded in "Barriers in the Border Areas" *Ri Xia Jiu Wen Kao*, a corpus of historical literature on Beijing, that supplies can be carried through Yuguan Pass and Juyongguan Pass; passengers and horses can pass through Songting, Jinpi and Gubeikou, but not carts. The southern side of the mountain abounded in grains, fruits and trees, but the land became barren kilometres away from the pass. The rich vegetation is an important part of the Great Wall scenery. For instance, the Juyongguan

1 Chronicles of the Great Wall of China: Overview.

2 Beijing Local Chronicle Compilation Committee. *Beijing Chronicles: World Cultural Heritage — Chronicles of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2008.



The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2018)

Pass has a high vegetation coverage on both sides with rolling mountains and lush forests. It was listed as one of the eight great views of Beijing as early as in the Nüzhen Jin Dynasty. At the same time, the forests and vegetation around the Great Wall represent a defensive barrier in themselves. The “Ji Zhen Jing Lue” in *Si Zhen San Guan Zhi*, annals of four towns and three passes on China’s northern border, recorded that troops were assigned to plant elms, willows, peach trees along the walls to fortify the border. Serving both scenic and defensive functions, the landforms, forests and vegetation constituted the natural environment and ecological space of and around the Great Wall.

Beijing is home to six water systems – the Yongding River, the Luanhe River, the Daqing River, the Beiyun River, the Chaobai River, and the Jiyun River, totaling more than

200 big and small rivers. They not only gave rise to the small plains in southern Beijing, but also benefited irrigation and navigation in history thanks to the abundant water resources. The water bodies along the Great Wall, including rivers, lakes and swamps, were all ingeniously integrated with the great wonder when it was sited, designed and built in order to establish a powerful military defence system.

“The unity of Man and Nature” is not just a fundamental philosophical proposition – it is a way of thinking in Chinese philosophy. This sentence by Mr. Tang Yijie, a famous Chinese philosopher, presents the basic fact that “the unity of Man and Nature” is the fundamental concept in traditional Chinese philosophy. As history rolls forward, this concept has not faded nor vanished in the transition of societies and the vicissitudes of time, but has been internalised as the ideological essence and most



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2019)

distinctive element of the Chinese culture – it runs in the blood of the Chinese, is found in classic lyrics and poetry, and embodied in the ancient buildings, calligraphy, and landscape paintings. Traditional Chinese architecture that demonstrates this value is enchanting both aesthetically and ideologically.

Half by Nature, Half by Man

“I never have figured out whether the Great Wall is a great mountain or a wall, whether it’s a natural view or the work of Qin Shihuang, the first emperor in Chinese history. The Great Wall impresses and amazes us with its endless extensions, its merging with mountains and earth, and its integration with national territory and historical memory.” In his postscript to William Lindesay’s *My Great Wall Life*, Chen Danqing called the Great Wall a “long surprise” that he has never fathomed. His candid words gave this great historical architecture the most sincere and genuine commendation.

As an ancient Eastern architecture, the Great Wall of China strictly follows the principle of “respecting heaven” and “following Nature’s course.” As a military defence project, it boasts the perfect complementarity between man-made fortifications and natural landforms. To say it’s half made by Nature and half by Man would be no exaggeration. The Great Wall is an architectural artwork co-created by Man and Nature. If we must put a name on it, it would be “Nature.”

Cooperation requires wisdom, not to mention the cooperation between Man and Nature. Since the period of Qin Shihuang, the wise Chinese ancients took “leveraging the landforms to build forts at dangerous

spots”¹ as a key guideline for building the Great Wall. Strategists of different dynasties all set great store by utilising the landforms and dangerous locations. *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, which is worshiped as the ancestor of all military treatises, recorded that the art of war recognised different types of terrains, and “On the Judgment of Generals” in the book *Wu Zi* authored by Wu Qi, a great strategist and general in the early Warring States Period, pointed out that a great geographical advantage was when 1,000 soldiers cannot pass a narrow and dangerous mountain pathway guarded by ten soldiers. All these ancient military treatises emphasise taking advantage of geographical importance to build defence systems. Regarding the siting, layout and construction of the Great Wall, the walls and fortresses were built and construction materials selected in light of the strategic importance and terrain features at each specific spot.

The philosopher *Mencius* recorded that “favourable weather and opportune timing is not as important as advantageous terrain, and advantageous terrain is not as important as the unity of people.” *The Art of War* by Sun Bin said “To win a war, favourable timing, geographic advantages, and the unity of the people all must be in place. If not, a victory will be costly.” It’s clear that “favourable timing, geographical advantage and unity of the people” were greatly valued by ancient strategists, and the emphasis on geographical advantage was fully reflected in the construction of the Great Wall, which boasts many miracles thanks to the clever utilisation of the terrain. One end of the Shanhaiguan Pass reaches into the sea while the other end stretches upward onto the mountain, thus connecting the mountains, the sea and the

1 Leveraging the landforms to build forts at dangerous spots, (the Great Wall) extends thousands of kilometres from Lintao to Liaodong, Sima Qian, *The Historical Records · Biography of Qin Shihuang*.

walls into an integrated defence system. At Jiumenkou, the gate city is built by water and the water runs on the mountains, setting the background of solid fortifications. The western section of the Great Wall extends deep into the desert and takes advantages of the dykes, dams and waterways when crossing the Yellow River, while walls and cities are built on plains, grasslands and dunes to make the Great Wall stretch in the flat wilds.¹

It is also recorded in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* that "the skilful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them," and that "with regard to narrow passes, if you can occupy them first, let them be strongly garrisoned and await the advent of the enemy...With regard to precipitous heights, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots and there wait for him to come up." Today, strategic strongholds built on "narrow passes" and "precipitous heights" can still be found at the Great Wall. The *Record of Emperor Xianzong of the Ming Dynasty* recorded a memorial submitted by an official named Yu Zijun, which reads as follows: "Given the high and steep mountains in the border areas of Yanqing, I request the approval to mobilise 50,000 labourers from Shanxi and Shaanxi, with rationed supplies, to build walls out of the mountains that stand more than eight metres tall." High walls and fortresses should also be built on the flats between mountains based on the local terrain and garrisoned for defence purposes. This approach of construction – building walls out of mountains – as was applied in the Yanqing sections of the Great Wall is obvious at the

Dongsancha and Xisancha in the southeast of the Badaling section. On steep precipices that were impossible for enemies to access, ancient Chinese didn't build firm walls like Badaling, but smartly leveraged the dangerous mountains or pared cliffs away sufficiently to create footholds easy to defend but hard to attack.² Besides, while these fortifications look extremely dangerous and forbidding from the outside, they are quite smooth on the inside, displaying wonderful workmanship.

The principle of "leveraging the landforms to build forts at dangerous spots" is also embodied in the construction of the Great Wall and the selection of materials for it. In their paper titled "A Study of the Construction Approach of Extant Ancient Great Walls in Ningxia," Ma Jianjun and Zhou Peini pointed out that "there are Great Wall ruins in Ningxia built in different historical periods...They are built in various ways based on local conditions, either compacted with loess, built with sand and gravel, piled up with rocks, carved out of mountains, or built over ravines to make use of the naturally dangerous landforms. There are also construction approaches typical of the local area." The rolling Great Wall extends on and on through diverse areas and natural environments. Making the best use of local conditions and materials is the best way to save manpower, materials and raise efficiency. That's why some sections of the Great Wall are made of earth, some of rocks and others with bricks and stones.

As a natural resource in abundance, stones are both easy and cheap to exploit and use. This, coupled with their hard texture and endurance, makes them a common construction material. The section of the

1 Dong Yaohui. Building Forts at Dangerous Spots: Spatial Principles in the Construction of the Great Wall [N]. *China Cultural Relics News*, 2016-04-08(3).

2 Ibid.

Great Wall in Beijing's Pinggu District is situated in a mountainous area. The builders used local stones to build the most part except passes and lookout towers that were based on boulder strips and built with large bricks, so undecorated that it gave a coarse and rustic beauty. This approach is generally called "Gan Cha Bian," meaning "piling up of raw stones." Rubbles are used to fill crevices between large rocks and inside walls. Stone walls built this way tend to lean toward the centre-line, resulting in a trapezoidal or inwardly rectangular cross-section with a smaller surface on top and a larger surface at bottom, which is good for the solidity and stability of the wall. Masons in the Ming Dynasty added lime mortar to stone walls to increase adhesion among the rocks and counter the effects of weathering. The "Gan Cha Bian" stone walls in Pinggu

look simple in structure, but are very stable and enduring even though some parts have collapsed through long years of weathering. This construction approach has been passed down from generation to generation till the present day, as enclosed walls built by local residents in this way can still be seen in the mountains of Pinggu.¹

For thousands of years, it was with this wisdom of taking full advantage of local conditions that ancient Chinese constructed the phenomenal military fortifications in the middle of wild mountains and dangerous precipices. Thousands of years have passed. The mountains and the Great Wall have become one. When dusk falls, the rolling mountains and the man-made structures blend in complete harmony and unity, leaving every visitor in awe and wonder.

1 The Education, Cultural, Healthcare, and Sports Committee of the Beijing CPPCC and International Institute for Urban Development. *The "Pinggu Volume" of The Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2018.

The Amazing 400 mm Isohyet

The Great Wall is both a geographical and cultural symbol of China. The part of the Great Wall in Beijing follows the 400 mm isohyet which used to divide agricultural civilisation from nomadic civilisation. The location of the isohyet indicates that the Beijing section of the Great Wall is in a transitional zone from sub-humid climate to semi-arid climate. Building the Great Wall in such places is to some extent the common result of human activities and climate transition and is closely related with the constant alternation between agriculture and animal husbandry. In ancient times, this gave rise to the following phenomenon; the *History of the Kingdom of Liao* also recorded that it was rainy and hot to the south of the Great Wall, where people planted crops for food and mulberry silk and flax for clothing, and built houses for living and cities for governance. In contrast, it was windy and cold in the northern desert, where people raised livestock and caught fish for food, wore leather and fur, and lived on horses and carts as they were always on the move.

The Division Between Farming and Animal Husbandry

The 400 mm isohyet is a vital geographical demarcation in China. It roughly runs through the Da Hinggan Range – Zhangjiakou – Lanzhou – Lhasa to the east of the Himalayas. It separates the sub-humid zone from the semi-arid zone, forest vegetation from grassland vegetation, and agricultural civilisation from nomadic civilisation. In history, regimes on the south of the Great Wall usually built fortifications to fend off the harrying and plundering of nomadic groups, which, traditionally living on the cold and barren grassland in the north of the Yanshan Mountain, were highly susceptible to the change of climate because of their reliance on farming, especially on animal husbandry. A snowstorm or a prolonged drought might push their economy and life to the brink of collapse. The cold season made things even harder for nomadic groups, who had to migrate south in



The Panlong Mountain section of the Great Wall (2021)

search for grasing lands, or they simply went south for plundering, thus trespassing into the territory of the agricultural groups. This inevitably led to military conflicts and forced the agricultural groups to build the Great Wall to prevent the southern migration and aggression of the nomadic groups. There were several cyclical fluctuations of warmth and cold in Chinese history, causing the 400 mm isohyet to move accordingly and the alternate southward and northward movement of the grasing and farming zones. The Great Wall was also built following this alternation, so what was originally an artificial defensive fortification ended up also functioning as a boundary between agriculture and animal husbandry.

More than 5,000 years ago, primitive agriculture became dominant in the areas along the Great Wall and has kept progressing ever since, while collecting, fishing and hunting were auxiliary means of production. In this process of production and development, farming and animal husbandry were gradually separated to adapt to the changing environment.¹ Agricultural economy required a fixed area of land and the “decisive factor for its economic and social development is the control, occupation and utilisation of land.”² With fixed land, agricultural economy featured regular cycles, adaptation to Nature, concentration, and high value of experience.

The nomads lived on the grasslands, with grasing and hunting as the main ways of

1 Dong Yaohui and Jia Huiming. *Chronicles of the Great Wall of China: Overview* [M]. Nanjing: Phoenix Science Press, 2016: 13–15.

2 Ibid.: 13.



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2020)

production and livestock as the vital means of living. Animal husbandry was the dominant economic activity for them.¹ According to the development of animal husbandry along the Great Wall north of the capital city in the Ming Dynasty, there was official animal husbandry and private animal husbandry. Zhu Yuanzhang, the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, attached great importance to both, allocated vast public pastures in Beiping, and stipulated that taxpayers could pay horses, sheep, leather, fur and tendons in lieu of taxes, so as to stimulate the development of private animal husbandry. In the nomadic economic system, the herdsmen, at the top of the nomadic food chain, played the part of breeders, coordinators and managers. They migrated by season and drove their livestock in pursuit of water and plants. The decisive factor for the development of nomadic economy was the

control of pasturing areas during migration.² A primary manifestation of the conflict between agricultural and nomadic regimes was their contention for the control of productive and living resources.

Agricultural groups and nomadic groups were not only in constant separation and confrontation but also communication and integration, and the areas along the Great Wall were the centre of their exchanges, from military standoff, Government communication to bilateral trade.³ The Great Wall mitigated their conflicts and confrontations by providing the basic conditions for their benign interactions as its very existence laid a good foundation for peacefully resolving the conflict of interests. It's safe to say that the Great Wall intensified the interdependence and mutual promotion between agricultural and nomadic groups, so they could advance the development

1 Ibid.: 14.

2 Ibid.: 13.

3 Ibid.: 15.

of border areas through peaceful interactions and normal economic exchanges.

Deciphering the “Hu Huanyong Line”

It is said that to understand the economic reality in China, one needs to start with a magical line – the Hu Huanyong Line that divides the vast Chinese territory into two parts. The line was drawn manually. In 1935, when computers were not even imagined, Chinese geographer Hu Huanyong, using statistics from the Kuomintang (KMT) government, spent months on the study of tons of data and marked out the corresponding spots on the Chinese map, each dot representing a population of 20,000 people. When these dots were connected, they formed a line starting in Heihe of Heilongjiang Province, extending to the southwest and ending in Yunnan’s Tengchong. The Hu Huanyong Line coincided with the 400 mm isohyet. On the southeast of it were mainly plains, water networks, hills, and karst and Danxia (unusual rock formation featuring precipitous red cliffs) landforms, where agriculture has been the economic foundation since ancient times; on the northwest of it was the scarcely populated grasslands, deserts and snow-capped plateaus, where nomads have been living since the earliest of times.

The Hu Huanyong Line represents a distinct demographic divide. It intersected with the Great Wall. The land to the northwest of the line accounted for 64% of the territory of the Republic of China but housed only 4% of the population, whereas the land on the other side of the line accounted for only 36% of the territory but housed 96% of the population.

Of the Great Geographical Discoveries of China in 100 Years selected in 2009, the Hu Huanyong Line was second only to the “measurement of Mount Qomolangma.” For China, the Hu Huanyong Line is not only a basic divide of demographic distribution – densely populated in the east and scarcely populated in the west, but also an important reference regarding many other aspects of the country, such as natural environment, level of economic development, difference in social and historical conditions, ethnic distribution, and level of urbanisation.¹

The Hu Huanyong Line has remained surprisingly stable. It’s like a magical, invisible “Great Wall” that confines the people living in its east and west to their respective zones. This, according to academic studies, is closely linked with natural endowments such as the altitude, types of landforms, and the quality of farmland.² In other words, “geographical traits” decide the stability of the line. The natural geographical division affects human migration, so demographic distribution basically coincides with it, thus further cementing the division. This is a universal law. There are similar lines in other countries, such as the U-shaped line in the US and an approximately oblique line in Russia that is based on temperature change. For the world, it is a deep V-shaped belt.³

The Resonance Between Climate and the Construction of the Great Wall

The economic activities of Mankind are closely related with the natural environment, and climate changes measured by 100 or 1,000 years

1 Zhang Kefeng. The “Hu Huanyong Line” in Historical Context [J]. *Du Shu*, 2021(1): 151–159.

2 Wang Guixin and Pan Zehan. The Robustness of Population Migration and Distribution in China and the Heihe-Tengchong Line [J]. *Chinese Journal of Population Science*, 2016(1): 13–126.

3 Stream and Ocean ed. The Amazing Geographical Boundary in China and Other Main Countries in the World [EB/OL]. (2018-09-16). http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/kNA6E_OnSRglyq7N8mwKQ.

are apparently related with the development and evolution of nations and ethnic groups. Studies reveal that in ancient China (before the 19th century) there were more conflicts in cold periods and better assimilation and greater prosperity in warm periods. The construction of the Great Wall was the combined result of a range of factors acting upon one another, and climate changes were just one of the external factors. However, analysis of climate changes shows that the cold-warm, dry-wet fluctuations in history resonated with the construction of the Great Wall in different dynasties, particularly with the selection of its sites.¹

In relatively cold periods in Chinese history, there were obviously more battles between the agricultural and nomadic groups living along the Great Wall. The Ming Dynasty existed in a well-known cold period, during which the temperature was below the global average with frequent fluctuations, hence the “Little Ice Age of the Ming and Qing Dynasties.” It was a period when wars between agricultural and nomadic groups in the south and north of the Great Wall almost never ended. It was also the last peak period to construct the Great Wall, when the defensive facilities and engineering and construction technologies were most mature. The main reason for this was that when it got cold, nomadic groups inhabiting the northern grasslands were threatened by

the depletion of pasture and shortage of food, so they would attack the agricultural regions in the south in order to obtain the production and living materials. In the face of the tough and strategically flexible nomadic groups, the agricultural groups usually built the Great Wall for self-defence. To some extent, this proves that the Great Wall is a linear cultural heritage that has converged the characteristics of different ethnic groups and witnessed the wane and wax of agricultural and nomadic cultures.² The special climate, precipitation, landforms and environments around the areas along the Great Wall decide the convergence of both groups and their agricultural production and nomadic economy here in ancient times.

History holds the key to the present and the future. We see the climate change in historical evolution and the development of civilisation. Now as the climate change becomes a global challenge, we as Mankind can draw experience and lessons from history. The climate change is an important factor that affects economic and social development, along with social and other factors. What’s most important is how to respond to the climate challenge, and that’s exactly where the ancient Chinese thought on Man-Nature relation can shed light on and provide references for us in the modern age.

1 Xie Dan. Relation Between Global Climate Changes and the Location of China’s Great Wall [C]. *2011 International Symposium on Teaching and Research of Architectural History (Collection of Papers)*: 421–425.

2 Tong Yangyang. The Great Wall and Grassland Threat – War Between Agricultural and Nomadic Groups, Construction of the Great Wall, Climate Change in the Ming Dynasty and Their Relations [J]. *Qinghai Journal of Ethnology*. 2019(4): 141–148.



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (Autumn of 2020)



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (Winter of 2019)

40°N – the Golden Latitude

When Nealkoos drew the first latitude after Alexander the Great initiated his eastward expedition in 334 BCE. He moved Mankind a giant step forward in objectively describing and understanding the world. 40°N is both the latitudinal token of Beijing and the geographic orientation of the Great Wall. On what historians and geographers call the “magical latitude,” geological situations, climate, historical and cultural landscapes are combined perfectly.

Lifting the Veil on Earth

In 334 BCE, Alexander the Great sailed southward across the ocean and continued on an eastward expedition. The accompanying geographer Nealkoos collected materials on the way and was preparing to draw a world map. He found that from west to east along the route of Alexander’s expedition, the change of seasons and the length of day were quite similar, so he marked the first

latitude on the map, which started from the Strait of Gibraltar, ran through the Taurus Mountains and the Himalayas, and reached the Pacific Ocean. Later, Eratosthenes, who was a long-term curator at the Alexandria Library, calculated the earth’s circumference to be 46,250 km, and drew a world map with seven longitudes and six latitudes. From 1519 CE to 1522 CE, Magellan’s fleet crossed the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean on its around-the-world voyage and finally returned to Spain, proving the earth was a globe and laying the foundation for designating the longitudes and latitudes.

As longitudes and latitudes were gradually established through ceaseless human explorations, the veil on the Earth was lifted. People outlined its shape on the tellurian globe with delicate arcs, and tried to fathom it through the crisscrossed longitudes and latitudes. From then on, people were able to observe and record what the Earth was really like in a scientific way, and they assigned

unique indications to its mountains, plains, deserts, rivers and islands. The Earth became more vivid and lifelike to the observers.

The Sweet 40°N Latitude

The 40°N latitude is a magical number that seems to have all God's favour and Nature's nourishment to itself. If the world gives off a smell, it must be sweet and it must be from the 40°N latitude.

Thanks to its geographical and ecological advantages, the 40°N latitude is known as a "golden production base of the best milk in the world," including the quality milk of Ireland, the Netherlands, France's Normandy, China's Inner Mongolia, and north Japan, which take a majority share in the global high-end dairy market. Every drop of fresh milk is a gift from Nature.

The area around the 40°N latitude is also a key production area of quality fruits. With 15-hour sun exposure on daily average, a day-night temperature drop of 10°C, and fertile, pollution-free soil, the land along this latitude nurtures Sunkist® oranges in California, grapes in Bordeaux of France and Sicily of Italy, and sweet apples (with a kernel resembling rock candy, hence the name "rock candy heart apple") in Aksu, China's Xinjiang. All these fruits have completely natural sweetness, which reminds you of the fragrant honey in spring, sweet puppy love in summer, luscious spring water in autumn, or the lingering flavour of warm liquor on a winter evening. Every bite is so pure and intoxicating that it brings back the beautiful memories.

The most inebriate sweetness along the 40°N latitude comes from wine. Wine has life. The climate, temperature and sunlight along the 40°N latitude are most suitable for vineyards, and they give birth to the most delicious grapes and consequently the best wine. The

latitude is home to some of the world's best-known wineries, such as California in the US and Bordeaux in France, where all kinds of grapes suitable for wine making grow. Among them, the vineyards at the foot of the Great Wall in the lofty Helanshan Mountain in west Ningxia have gained the place the reputation of "Jiangnan on the northern border" for its beauty and prosperity.

The Ningxia Plains were a strategic stronghold in history for their great geographical location and time-honoured agricultural culture. Through 2,000 years, Ningxia has inherited many historical toponyms with military elements, such as *Guan* (pass), *Ying* (battalion), *Bao* (fortress) and *Zhai* (stockade), with Zhenbeibao, the hometown of the western film city, being most celebrated. The modern wine industry in Ningxia originated in Yuquanying. In July 2021, the National Open Development Comprehensive Pilot Zone for Grape and Wine Industry was established in Ningxia, and the core area of the pilot zone was planned to cover 108 square kilometres, including Minning of Yongning County and Jinshan of Helan County, Yinchuan City.

The pilot zone radiates to an area of 394.2 square kilometres, including Zhenbeibao of Yinchuan's Xixia District, Gezishan of Qingtongxia in Wuzhong and Xiaojiayao of Hongsibao District, Wuzhong, and Luoshandonglu of Tongxin County. "There are orchards under Helanshan Mountains; northern Jiangnan has long been its name." When Wei Chan, a poet in the late Tang Dynasty, wrote this poem, it was more than 200 years after Hou Junji, a famous general in the Tang Dynasty, occupied Gaochang. Grapes had long taken root along the Silk Road, the methods of making wine had been introduced to the Central Plains, and the orchards in Ningxia already had grown grapes. This means grapes have grown



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2020)

in Ningxia for more than 1,000 years. What the poem describes – orchards under Helan Mountains – was actually in ancient Lingzhou, a place located in today’s Wuzhong City.

In 1317 CE, Ma Zuchang, a supervisory inspector, was assigned to the northwest for a social survey, and he recorded his findings in Ningxia in a book titled *Lingzhou*. In the book was a sentence reading “delicious wine, alfalfa by the farmland,” which showed that grapes and alfalfa were widely planted in Ningxia in the Yuan Dynasty and it was common to make wine out of grapes. Obviously, the northern border area was rife with sweet-scented fruits, abundant grain, luscious grapes and great wines at the time...Along the 40°N latitude, every vineyard has its unique wine with unique flavour, but every flavour makes you feel

graceful, romantic and delighted. Every bottle of wine has its own story to tell, and tasting them is like getting a glimpse of different lives, with much room for imagination...

A Bridge Connecting Civilisations

As human beings began to use latitude and longitude to study the Earth, these are no longer just coordinates, but embody rich ecological and cultural connotations.

Leaving an indelible mark on the history of human development with its affluence, sweetness and wonder, the 40°N latitude is lauded as the “golden necklace of the earth.” It gave birth to historical places like Beijing, Rome and Greece, nurtured the prosperity and popularity of New York and Chicago, created fabulous scenic sites



The Baimaguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

such as the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Sea of Japan, the Caspian Sea and the Qinghai Lake, and produced wine that was coveted around the world. What's more, the Great Wall in Beijing, the Parthenon Temple in Athens, the Triangle of Art in Madrid, the Colosseum in Rome and the church of Hagia Saint Sophia in Istanbul are the most brilliant pearls strung on this golden necklace.

It is the crown jewel of civilisation in the eyes of historians and the heaven of art for artists. For every Chinese, it is where our capital city is, where the Great Wall stands, and where the spirit of China and the soul of the Chinese Nation lie.

Beijing, the capital of China, is located at 40°N. It leaves deep impressions in every Chinese:

You may feel the centuries-long profundity and serenity of the Forbidden City

on a sunny morning after a snowfall, look from afar at the imposing Great Wall meandering on the ridges on an autumn day surrounded by a sea of red leaves, or sit by the Kunming Lake at sunset and have a silent talk with the Seventeen-Arch Bridge crouching over it like a rainbow, feeling the tranquility and joy in the depth of time... In the words of Lao She, a famous Chinese writer, it's easy to point to a single spot of Beijing, but that would belittle the city by far. After all, this is the city that houses the most world-class cultural heritage sites in the world, where history and modernity are so harmoniously and naturally blended. You are looking back in history one second and embracing all the modern facilities the next. The Great Wall adds to the extraordinary grace and unique fascination of the capital city of Beijing, which is splendid, stately, leisurely and relaxing all at once in the eyes of Yu Dafu,

a renowned modern Chinese prose writer.

In the eyes of Edmund N. Bacon, an American expert on urban planning and design, Beijing is the greatest single project on earth; for French writer Victor Segalen, Beijing is the ideal home he dreams of. For Liang Sicheng and Zhang Henshui, Beijing is the city that best represents the architectural aesthetics, wisdom and charm of the East. In the eyes of Lin Yutang, Beijing is a king's dream, a wonderland for gourmets, a place for both the poor and the rich, a heaven for shoppers, and a city of colours both old and new...Most importantly, Beijing is an ideal city where everyone has a place, where the countryside is as serene as the city is comfortable. For every Chinese, "Beijing is like a lover or a mother, who seems to appeal to every tourist from other places with an irresistible glamour."¹ For foreigners, "Beijing represents the whole of China and everything about it."²

On the Chinese map, the Great Wall is close to the 40°N latitude. It starts in the east – whether it's the generally accepted Shanhaiguan Pass or the Hushan Mountain in Liaoning's

Dandong by the Yalu River that was determined in the Ming Dynasty. It ends in the west – whether it's the Jiayuguan Pass of the Ming Dynasty, the Yumenguan Pass further to the west, or the Fengsuibao in Xinjiang. No matter which it is, they are on the 40°N latitude or its two sides. Where the Great Wall is located in Beijing has been a critical ecological space in history. It is roughly divided into two systems – the east-west system and the north-west system, which converge at the watershed southwest of Jiushuikeng in Huairou District (116°30'6.3"E, 40°28'55"N in the north; 116°29'38.9"E and 40°27'45"N in the south). Almost all major historical events in Chinese history, either political, economic or cultural, have left a deep imprint on the Great Wall ever since it was built.³

The 40°N latitude is indeed an unbelievable geographical belt. It rolls on and on for thousands of kilometres, not only stringing the different sections of the Great Wall, but also dividing the north and the south of China with their different climates, altitudes, landforms, and lifestyles.⁴

1 Quoted from Xie Bingying's "Love of Beiping."

2 Quoted from a letter from Victor Segalen to Debussy in 1910.

3 The 40°N Latitude, a Mysterious Line Related with Every Chinese [EB/OL]. [2021-12-20]. http://www.sohu.com/a/409856329_650579.

4 Chen Fumin. *The 40°N Latitude* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 2021.





The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2018)

Natural Reserve and Ecological Conservation Zone

What is ecology? In ancient Greek, it meant “residence” or “habitat”; the Chinese apprehended it as “home.” The Great Wall is not only the spiritual home of the Chinese, but also the habitat of a myriad of animals and plants. There are several state-level natural reserves along the Great Wall, including the Dunhuang Xihu in Gansu, the Helan Mountains in Ningxia, the Luya Mountain in Shanxi, and the Little Mount Wutai and Wuling Mountain in Hebei. The areas where the Great Wall in Beijing is located, such as Pinggu, Miyun, Huairou, Yanqing, Changping and Mentougou, all districts in the north of the city, are important ecological conservation zones serving as protective barriers.

Having withstood wind and rain for thousands of years, the Great Wall of China has become more fragile ecologically speaking, and the Government and all walks of life have attached great importance to the restoration of its ecology. The Plan of Beijing for Protecting and Developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt

(2018–2035) pledged to build an ecological Great Wall and bring it into part of the efforts to develop the cultural belt. Steps have been taken to restore the Great Wall’s ecology, which is one of four key tasks. There was a time when the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Programme, which was reputed as the “Green Great Wall,” amased the world. Today, guided by the thought of developing ecological civilisation, China is building an “ecological Great Wall.” When people walk on the Great Wall in the near future, they will not only be able to feel the vicissitudes of history, but also indulge in the heady green surroundings.

Ecological Fragility and Environmental Restoration

The Great Wall of China is situated in a transitional area between the warm temperate zone and the temperate zone, traversing the sub-humid climate, the semi-arid climate and the arid climate from east to west. The



The Gubeikou section of the Great Wall (2018)

Great Wall also features various landforms and fragile ecology.¹ Take the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty for example. Its eastern and central sections were at the intersection of the warm temperate zone and the mid-temperate zone, which were in the transitional area between sub-humid and semi-arid zones and between the monsoon zone and the non-monsoon zone. Forests and grassland, oasis and desert could all be found here, resulting in a highly fragile and sensitive environment that was prone to damage.

The Great Wall was a transitional area where the agricultural and nomadic activities were mingled and mixed. There were several times when agricultural groups in the south

crossed the Great Wall to develop agriculture in the north and nomadic groups came down to graze in the south, which deteriorated the land and accelerated desertification. After the Kingdom of Liao was formed, it launched many attacks on the south and captured many people in the Horqin Grassland for agricultural production. With the arrival of these people, Liao built more than 60 new prefectures and counties by reclaiming the wasteland. This effectively strengthened the kingdom in the short term, but didn't bode well for the future ecology, environment, and man-Nature relations. When Liao came to its late period, the Horqin area experienced drastic ecological and land degradation, and the cities it had built

¹ Kong Fande. Characteristics of Ecological Destruction along the Great Wall of China and Protection Countermeasures [J]. *Research of Soil and Water Conservation*, 2006 (2): 42–43.



The Huanghuacheng section of the Great Wall (2021)

were basically left to ruins by the Nüzhen Jin Dynasty, when desertification was extremely serious. A lot of the agricultural population moved out, bringing agriculture to north China, and the intersection belt of agriculture and animal husbandry moved too. In the early Qing Dynasty, the government implemented a policy of relocating people to border areas for defence purposes. It encouraged Han farmers to farm and graze on the other side of the Great Wall and to reclaim the mountains and hills there. As a result, the northern boundary of agricultural landscape was pushed to the area between the south of Ongniud Banner and the central and northern parts of Aohan Banner. In the late Qing Dynasty, the government

began to reclaim the plains and plateaus, which further worsened the ecology and environment along the Great Wall and pushed northward the intersection belt of agriculture and animal husbandry.¹

The artificial movement of the intersection belt seriously damaged the ecology. Studies show that every period of active desertification along the Great Wall in the north coincided with the period when agricultural groups in the south crossed the Great Wall to expand agricultural reclamation northward. After the ecological and environmental deterioration occurred beyond the Great Wall, agricultural production had to pull back and animal husbandry returned, which stabilised the trend

1 Guo Dezheng and Yang Shuying. Ecological Study of the Great Wall in North China [J]. *Environmental Protection*, 2005(1): 46–48, 53.

of desertification and even led to signs of restoration.¹

The Great Wall of China doesn't exist on its own. It is closely related with the natural environment around it, and the damage to local ecology and environment is threatening the protection of the ancient sites. Incorporating the Great Wall in the plan for ecosystem protection and restoring its natural ecology is an important precondition for its sustainable development.

"Take nothing but photos; leave nothing but footprints." Everyone to the Great Wall must have seen this sentence on the poster board there. It was written by a British visitor called William Lindesay, a well-known person in the circle of Great Wall preservation. William first came to know the ancient and mysterious Great Wall on a World atlas when he was 11 years old, and that started his long story with the world wonder.

Respecting history and culture, protecting heritage and Nature – that's the only way we can pass everything that has enchanted us to the next generation. "The place we are leaving is as clean as when we arrived. We are just passers-by, who should never disturb Nature and History." We hope that everyone that comes to the Great Wall will be not just a friendly passer-by, but also a "watcher" and a "protector" of this great miracle that has witnessed the rise and fall of the sun and the moon for thousands of years.

The Stunning "Green Great Wall"

Speaking of the "Green Great Wall," the first thing that many people would think of is the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Programme.² This Green Great Wall, which

spans the northwest, north and northeast of China, stands side by side with the ancient Great Wall to guard the history and future of this land, bearing witness to the struggles and dreams of the Chinese Nation. In 1978, China decided to build the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest in the northwest, north of northern China and west of the northeast where sand storms and water and soil erosion were extremely serious. The programme crossed 559 counties (banners, districts and cities) in 13 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions from east to west, south to north, covering about 4,069,200 square kilometres in total, which accounted for 42.4% of the country's land. Started in 1979, the programme will lasts 71 years and is carried out in eight phases through three stages, with a planned afforestation area of 535 million *mu* (about 356,667 square kilometres). When it is completed in 2050, the forest coverage ratio in the Three-North region (northwest, north and northeast) will increase from 5.05% to 14.95%.

The *Journal of Commerce*, a newspaper in the US, wrote in 1986 that the constant invasions by nomads from the north prompted kingdoms in ancient China to build the Great Wall. Today a new Great Wall, a forest shelterbelt comprised of trees, shrubs and grass, is taking shape to prevent a more menacing invader – the desert. Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* also reported in 1991 that the Great Wall in China is the longest architecture on earth, but an environmental project is beating this record. This is a "wood" Great Wall that China has been building since 1978 with billions of trees, generally known as the Green Great Wall. It's not used to forestall the invasion of nomads, but to fend off the

1 Ibid.

2 The Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Programme refers to a large artificial afforestation programme in the northwest, north and northeast of China.

encroachment of the Gobi desert and the desert from Central Asia.

Those foreign media outlets thought that since it took over 2,000 years to build the ancient Great Wall, building the new green wall must be equally arduous, but the Chinese have accomplished this almost impossible mission.¹ The sun rises and falls, and seasons come and go. Generations of Chinese have devoted themselves to this great cause and hundreds of millions of people have worked successively to erect this Green Great Wall along the northern border of the country to resist wind and sand, maintain water and soil, and protect agriculture and promote animal husbandry, setting a great example for the development of ecological civilisation. By 2020, the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Programme has cumulatively afforested 30,143,000 hectares of areas, increasing the forest coverage ratio in the programme area from 5.05% in 1977 to the current 13.57%, and the volume of living wood growing stock from 720 million cubic metres to 3.33 billion.

The Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Programme has been recognised by the world. The website of Deutsche Welle reported in August 2017 that the World Future Council (WFC) awarded China the Silver Future Policy Award, which was designed to celebrate the best policies to combat desertification and land degradation. Alexandra Wandel, Director of the World Future Council (WFC), said China winning the 2017 Silver Future Policy Award sent a strong signal that a country susceptible to desertification and climate change can find a wise and viable way to respond to a global challenge. China and other award winners are leading the global efforts of environmental

protection. Months later, at the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in December 2017, China's Saihanba afforestation community was awarded the UN Champions of the Earth Award, UN's top environmental award.²

The mountains have turned green for as far as I can see. Since 2000, one fourth of the new green areas around the globe comes from China, which is now a major contributor to global greening. At the same time, it is making unprecedented efforts to protect its mother rivers – the Yangtze River and the Yellow River – and keep them vigorous and full of vitality. The country has implemented three massive action plans for the prevention and control of air, water and soil pollution respectively, in a bid to bring back the blue sky, clear, limpid waters and green mountains. A green symphony of ecological civilisation is being performed across China, and a beautiful country with blue sky, green land and clear waters is coming back.

The Great Wall is the spiritual symbol of the Chinese Nation. Having stood high and noble for 2,000 years and spanning thousands of kilometres, it is a magnificent architectural miracle and peerless cultural sight in human history. It is unique not only because it's a world heritage site that is worth protection by the whole mankind, but also because it has exerted profound impacts on the man – Nature relation in this region, given birth to the cultural richness and diversity with the Great Wall as the pillar, and fostered a complete ecosystem over such a massive geographical expanse. These constitute an incomparable unity of cultural and natural elements.³ In this sense, the Great Wall is a perfect combination

1 The World Acclaims China's Green Great Wall [EB/OL]. (2019-11-25). <http://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn>.

2 Ibid.

3 Plan of Beijing for Protecting and Developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt (2018–2035).



The Qinglongxia Great Wall (2021)

of culture and Nature. While being the spiritual symbol of the Chinese Nation, it's also the best example of ecological conservation and green development in China.

Building an ecological Great Wall is a major task in developing the Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt. In the Medium to Long-term Plan of Beijing for Developing a National Cultural Centre (2019–2035), Article 49 clearly states that Beijing will build an “ecological Great Wall,” strengthen the protection of ecological conservation zones, and restore the environment and ecology of the mountains, rivers and valleys around the Great Wall, so as to ensure the ecological and environmental security of the Great Wall Cultural Belt. The city will carry out afforestation on a large scale based on local conditions, restore some sites of cultural

interests that used to be famous in history, develop a multi-coloured forest belt and green pathways along the Great Wall, and nurture an ecological landscape that's pleasant to the eye and good for water conservation. The natural reserves, forest parks and wetland parks along the cultural belt will be better protected in a holistic way to highlight the Great Wall's role as an ecological barrier. The Plan of Beijing for Protecting and Developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt (2018–2035) (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) was officially released on April 16, 2019. Under the guideline of protecting and developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt, it vowed to “foster an ecological Great Wall and showcase its historical, cultural and scenic value while being an important military defence system for the capital city.” Restoring

the ecology around the Great Wall was made one of the four key tasks in developing the cultural belt, for which fifteen measures in four aspects have been adopted – restoring the environment for the very existence of the Great Wall, planting two ecological barriers, promoting the construction of a national park, and fostering ecological and cultural sites.

The Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt forms an open ecosystem that's not confined to a specific scope of space, but is affiliated to a broader system with which it exchanges information, materials and energy continuously. The protection of the Great Wall is closely linked with the environment surrounding it and is mutually beneficial with the surrounding scenic resources. The precondition for developing an ecological Great Wall is establishing a comprehensive natural environment protection system along the Great Wall to keep its ecosystem intact and sustainable. Therefore, the ecosystem of the Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt must coordinate and blend with the ecosystem of the entire Beijing, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and beyond. That's the starting point and purpose of developing the ecological Great Wall. The Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt spans the ecological conservation zone in northern China, accounting for about 30% of the city's area.¹ On the one hand, the development of this cultural belt will be based on the environment and resources of the ecological conservation zone. On the other, it will motivate the coordinated development of its environment and resources. Intensifying the protection of ecological conservation zones and restoring the mountains, rivers and valleys is the precondition for developing an ecological Great Wall.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

The Plan systematically combed through the cultural and natural resources along the Great Wall based on how much they contribute to its value. Efforts were made to survey 2,873 spots of protected resources at 664 locations and categorize them under three themes – Great Wall heritage, cultural resources and ecological resources, with the last category including natural reserves, scenic spots, forest parks, wetland parks, geological parks, mining parks, and important water source areas. Statistics show the mountainous areas in north Beijing are now home to 16 scenic areas, eight of which are related with the Great Wall, and in those scenic areas are 10 forest parks, three geological parks, two mining parks and three wetland parks. There are also 1,850 officially protected cultural heritage sites, 14 historical and cultural villages and towns, and 165 villages of folk tourism.² The concentration of these key natural or cultural resources is good for the protection of the Great Wall. In turn, the Great Wall heritages also complement and improve the surrounding scenic resources and drive and lead regional development. Protecting the Great Wall and its surrounding resources as a whole and pursuing their common development is an important thought of developing the ecological Great Wall.

Sustaining the Great Wall is the wish of every Chinese citizen and the wish of the whole of Mankind that cherishes this gem of human civilisation and looks forward to it lasting forever. Civilisation prospers when ecology prospers; civilisation declines when ecology declines. A sound ecology is the foundation for the sustainable development of the Great Wall. "Nothing can stop us from success as long as we pool together the

strengths and wits of all.”¹ We look forward to more people joining the cause of developing the ecological Great Wall. Let’s dress it up with trees and flowers and help it stand up tall and proud for decades, centuries and millennia to come, so that it can tell the miraculous stories of the great Chinese Nation to future generations, and witness a bright future of enduring human development.

Biodiversity and a Community of Shared Future for All Life on Earth

Biodiversity is essential for human existence and development as it provides a rich variety of living and productive necessities, a healthy and safe environment, and special natural landscape. At the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, the participating countries signed the *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, which listed the protection of biodiversity among the 26 principles. In 1993, the *Convention on Biological Diversity* officially came into effect, which reaffirmed three goals: conserving biodiversity, using its components in a sustainable manner, and sharing equitably and reasonably the benefits arising from the use of inherited resources, thus turning a new page in global biodiversity protection. In 1994, the first Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Nassau, Bahamas, at which the Medium-term Programme of Work for the Period 1995–1997 was adopted. After that, the Conferences of the Parties were held in Indonesia’s Jakarta (1995), Argentina’s Buenos Aires (1996), Slovakia’s Bratislava (1998), Kenya’s Nairobi (2000), the Netherlands’ Hague (2002), Malaysia’s

Kuala Lumpur (2004), Brazil’s Curitiba (2006), Germany’s Bonn (2008), Japan’s Nagoya (2010), India’s Hyderabad (2012), ROK’s PyeongChang (2014), Mexico’s Cancun (2016), and Egypt’s Sharm el Sheikh (2018).

China’s vast territory, large swathes of land and sea, and complicated and varied landforms and climate give rise to rich and unique ecosystems, species and hereditary diversity, making it one of the countries with the largest biodiversity in the world. In the meantime, China’s time-honoured traditional culture has nurtured abundant wisdom about biodiversity and a primitive awareness of biodiversity protection, such as the idea of “the unity of Man and Nature,” “following Nature’s course” and “all beings are equal.” Being one of the first signatories of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, China attaches great importance to biodiversity protection, and its innovative efforts have yielded notable results – effective protection of 90% of vegetation forms and land ecosystems, 65% of advanced plant communities, and 85% of key protected wildlife. By blazing a path of biodiversity protection with Chinese characteristics, the country has made important contributions to promoting the global protection of biodiversity and creating a new situation of harmonious co-existence between Man and Nature.

The plant communities along the Great Wall are not only important scenic resources, but also vital for the protection of local ecology and environment. Protecting the biodiversity along and around the Great Wall and mitigating the deterioration of the forests’ barrier function are critical for the protection of the Great Wall.

The “Badaling Friendship Forest” is a typical case in question. Authorities

1 Liu An, *Huai Nan Zi*.



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2020)

closed off the mountains at Badaling for afforestation in the 1950s and began to develop the Badaling Friendship Forest in December 2000, which was completed on October 28, 2003, and designated as a “key national protected forest for public welfare” by the Beijing municipal government in 2004.¹ The restored forest vegetation provides a suitable habitat for all kinds of creatures and brings this treasured land into unlimited life and vitality.

The 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in two phases in Kunming, south China’s Yunnan Province, the first phase from October 11 to 15, 2021, and the second phase in the first half of 2022. It is the first UN conference centred on ecological civilisation. In the theme of “Ecological Civilisation: Building a Shared

Future for All Life on Earth,” the meeting advocated global ecological civilisation, underscored the importance of building a community with a shared future for man and Nature, and emphasised the respect for, adaptation to and protection of Nature. It called for joint efforts to achieve the goals set in the convention: sustainable use of and sharing of benefits from biodiversity, and harmonious co-existence between Man and Nature by 2050. Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the meeting in Kunming via video link and delivered a keynote speech. He pointed out The 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has great significance. It will identify targets and pathways for global biodiversity protection in the future. In the context, the international community must enhance cooperation,

1 Li Xiaoming. International Friendship Forest at Badaling Section of the Great Wall Opens for Visitors [EB/OL]. [2021-12-20]. <http://news.sohu.com/95154/news215065495.shtml>.

build consensus and pool strength to build a community of all life on Earth.

In the future, the Great Wall, a green corridor of biodiversity in north China, will be China's longest "green lung." More studies will be carried out and more steps will be taken to protect biodiversity in the region to make the Great Wall a landmark in an eco-friendly China and further demonstrate China's commitment to biodiversity protection. Next, protecting biodiversity along the Great Wall will also be listed as a key project in Beijing's

ecological development campaign. The city will cultivate multiple wild habitats such as forests, bushes, meadows and wetlands and turn them into "heaven for birds" and "home for fishes," in a bid to implement the integrated protection and systematic governance of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts. The Great Wall will become a typical example of Beijing's ecological development characterised by the protection of biodiversity and the harmonious co-existence between Man and Nature.



The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2017)

A full-page background image showing a night sky with the Milky Way galaxy. The galaxy's bright, cloudy band of stars stretches diagonally from the upper left towards the lower right. The sky is a deep blue, filled with numerous individual stars. Below the horizon, a dark, silhouetted mountain range is visible against a faint, warm orange glow on the right side, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

Part IV

The Perpetual Beauty

The tribulations of the Great Wall straddling the “Dragon’s Back” shaped the soul of the Chinese culture, and each brick or piece of stone on the Great Wall contains the spiritual DNA of the Chinese Nation. Spirit is the essence of the Great Wall of China. Culture is its value. In the past 2,000 years or more, running over 100,000 li long, the Great Wall has witnessed the ups and downs of China. The Great Wall embodies the Chinese Nation’s spirit of unceasingly striving for self-improvement and being as united as the impregnable Great Wall. It also epitomises Chinese patriotism and perseverance. It has become a signature of the Chinese Nation and a symbol of Chinese civilisation. Its perpetual beauty lies in the beauty of the Chinese culture. Carrying forward the Great Wall culture amounts to building the cornerstone of national cultural confidence. We must do a better job exploring the Great Wall’s cultural value and protecting the cultural heritage to promote the Chinese national spirit. We will keep the Great Wall culture alive, making it shine and thrive, and in this way, we will contribute to the realisation of the Chinese Dream of rejuvenating the Chinese Nation.

The Cultural Vitality of the Great Wall

Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. Cohesion comes from the protection of traditions, and its vitality lies in its inheritance and continuous development from generation to generation. Of the confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the confidence in the culture is fundamental. President Xi Jinping says, “Cultural confidence in one’s culture, which is a broader, deeper, and more fundamental form of self-confidence, is the most essential, profound, and enduring source of strength for the development of a country and a nation. Without a thriving culture and firm confidence in it, the Chinese nation cannot achieve rejuvenation.”

The Enduring Power of National Rejuvenation

Culture, in a broad sense, includes the sum of the material and spiritual wealth created by humankind. Human society is a diverse, complex, relatively independent, and

mutually complementary organism composed of political, economic, and cultural systems. Xi Jinping illustrates various systems’ different functions and interrelationships by quoting a philosopher’s metaphor, “Politics is the bones, the economy is flesh and blood, and culture is the soul.” On August 12, 2005, Xi Jinping published “Culture is the Soul” in the *Zhejiang Daily*’s “Zhijiang: China, A New Vision for Development” column. He says in the article, “The power of culture is also what we call the soft power of culture that constitutes comprehensive competitiveness. Like the gentle spring rain that quietly moistens everything, culture always finds its way into economic, political, and social powers, becoming a ‘booster’ that drives the economy, a ‘pilot beacon’ that illuminates politics, and an adhesion agent that bonds a harmonious society.”¹ The essential function of culture is to provide a series of values to the whole society to lead the way, unite the people, and integrate society. For that

1 Xi Jinping, Culture Is the Soul [N]. *Zhejiang Daily*, 2005-08-12.



The beacon tower (2021)

matter, of path, theory, system, and culture in which we must be confident, culture, which demonstrates values, is undoubtedly the soul. The path, theory, and system are but the expression of culture and the externalisation of its values. History has repeatedly proved that it's impossible for a nation that abandons or betrays its history and culture to develop. On the contrary, it would suffer one tragedy after another as it did in history. Especially a large nation, a large country, and a large party like ours, if we are in an unfavourable situation regarding culture and lose our cultural independence, then the independence of our system and sovereignty would be shaken at its root.¹

Since ancient times, the Chinese culture has formed a series of core values, such as making unceasing efforts to improve oneself, promoting growth relying on great virtues, living in harmony and coexistence, and the philosophy of change and adaption. Those values provide rich nourishment for the Chinese Nation to keep growing and developing, enabling the Chinese Nation to head off one disaster after another and survive crowning calamities like a phoenix reborn from fire. They also allow the Chinese culture to be as inclusive as the ocean that receives the waters from all rivers to enrich and advance itself continuously. The Great Wall is undeniably the most central, recognised, and

¹ Party School of the Central Committee of CPC (National Academy of Governance). *Basic Philosophy of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era* [M]. Beijing: People's Press, 2020.

representative medium and symbol of such a culture and its values. The Great Wall of China has played a role in embodying the traditional Chinese culture and its symbolic significance, providing the Chinese people with spiritual guidance. Therefore, it highlights the essential characteristics and primary functions of the current section in Beijing. The Great Wall epitomises Chinese people's patriotism, desire for unity, perseverance, self-improvement, the yearn for peace, and spirit of openness and inclusiveness. Tempered through the ages, those values have become deeply embedded in the Chinese Nation's DNA, becoming the mighty spiritual power to continue to make efforts to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. In August 2019, President Xi Jinping came to Jiayuguan Pass to inspect the architectural layout and the geographical environment. After listening to a report on protecting and inheriting the Great Wall cultural heritage, he said, "In today's world, when people think of China, they naturally think of the Great Wall; when they think of Chinese civilisation, they also think of the Great Wall. The Great Wall, the Yangtze River, and the Yellow River are important symbols of the Chinese Nation and significant marks of the Chinese Nation's spirit. We must attach importance to the protection and inheritance of history and culture and protect the continual spiritual roots of the Chinese Nation."

The Great Wall Cultural Belt connects the traditional farming and nomadic cultures. It has experienced war and peace alternating in history. Based on the colourful lives of the Chinese people living around it, the Great Wall, together with its walls, passes, battlements, and beacon towers, has contributed to building a platform for people's rich economic,

ethnic, and cultural activities, and eventually crystalised into a tangible and intangible cultural backbone like that of a dragon gliding for thousands of kilometres. Mr. Xu Jialu, Dean of Beijing Cultural Development Research Institute of Beijing Normal University, put forward the theory of three levels of culture in the book *The Future and Mission of the Chinese Culture*: surface, middle, and bottom. The bottom culture is one shared by the whole nation, and it is the soul and core of cultural integration. Even if the surface culture is different from the middle culture, the Chinese Nation will be a stable community as long as the bottom culture remains the same.¹ The Great Wall brought together the Han culture and the cultures of other minority ethnic groups, each rich and colourful in their own way. The ethnic Han's language, ideological system, culture, and art have profoundly influenced the cultural development of the minority ethnic groups along the Great Wall. While the Han culture spread to the ethnic minority areas along the Great Wall, the ethnic cultures also exerted influence on the Central Plains' cultural development. The integration of the Han culture with the cultures of various minority ethnic groups has gradually given rise to a unified and diverse Chinese culture. From borrowing from and integrating with each other initially, the surface and middle levels of culture eventually have resulted in the wisdom of the open, tolerant, and inclusive Chinese culture and finally constituted the core of Chinese civilisation.

Culture is a vital force for a nation's survival and development. Every leap forward of human society and every sublimation of human civilisation is accompanied by historical progress in culture. The Chinese Nation has a 5,000-year history of civilisation,

1 Xu Jialu. *The Future and Mission of Chinese Culture* [M]. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2017.

and China has always been one of the world's powers before modern times. The Chinese Nation has survived drastic changes in the past ages and it went through countless trials and tribulations. One of the most important reasons is that generations of the Chinese people have nurtured and developed a unique, extensive, and profound Chinese culture. It has provided solid spiritual support for the Chinese Nation to overcome difficulties and continue to thrive. The Great Wall embodies the infinite wisdom and majesty of the Chinese Nation capable of overcoming myriad problems, averting many dangers, and using nature to transform nature. A great nation that built the Great Wall has also fostered the Great Wall spirit of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-improvement. In China's confrontation with Western powers in modern times, the Great Wall became a spiritual banner to rally the Chinese strength. A culture with a long history is bound to have the ability to nurture the current civilisation. The construction of the Great Wall has overlapped the development of Chinese History. It represents the high level of the Chinese consciousness to inherit and carry forward Chinese civilisation and, therefore, has become a powerful driving force for the Chinese people to come together and forge ahead in the cause of national rejuvenation.

The Great Wall is more an object and entity that has stood firm for over a thousand years than a symbol of the resilient spirit and culture of the Chinese Nation. Facing the same Great Wall, what a foreign tourist and a Chinese see and feel are different. In the former's eyes, it may be only a military defence project. Therefore, as a traveller from afar who climbs the Great Wall with difficulty, he feels amazed more by the gigantic size of the Great Wall, the scale of its sheer length, and the complexity of this incredible engineering

wonder. To them, the Great Wall is only an object and a magnificent project. In the eyes of every Chinese who climbs the Great Wall and views the rolling mountains, what stretches for thousands of kilometres is not just brick walls but a national bloodline. What stands along the Great Wall is not just beacon towers but the Nation's backbone, and what sits upon the Great Wall is not just battlements but the unyielding will of the Chinese Nation. Each part of the Great Wall's masonry, stone, and earthworks has kept Chinese civilisation going as an independent cultural system and contributed to the civilisation's inheritance and development. Not to mention the uncountable workforce, infinite human wisdom, hundreds of years, and innumerable lives that went into the construction of the Great Wall. Therefore, as a world miracle constructed by humankind challenging the limits of survival, the Great Wall is undoubtedly the richest cultural heritage left by the Chinese ancestors to the Chinese Nation and even humanity at large. Only by further understanding and exploring the cultural functions of the Great Wall can we honestly figure out the path of the Chinese Nation and identify the context of the Chinese civilisation.

Origin and Evolution

What is China? This has been a popular research topic in the academic world in recent years, and most of the researchers are historians, such as Professors Ge Zhaoguang and Li Ling. Philosopher Zhao Tingyang, however, tries to answer the question from the perspective of epistemology. He has tried to construct an interdisciplinary "comprehensive text" to understand China. Therefore, in his *The Making and Becoming of China: Its Way of Historicity*, he defends a unique theoretical explanation: the "vortex model." He explains



The Precipice Tower (2021)

that the growth pattern of China from the Shang and Zhou dynasties to the end of the Qing Dynasty has been a vortex with strong centripetal force. The vortex's centripetal movement has continuously sucked various cultures up from various places around the Central Plains and pulled them together.¹

The three hottest topics about China are as follows. First, the Chinese civilisation is a civilisation that has never been interrupted since its origins, which means that the Chinese civilisation provides a great measure

of continuity. Second, the Chinese civilisation has always been composed of multiple ethnic groups and cultures, which means that Chinese civilisation has a broad spectrum of compatibility. Third, Chinese civilisation has not produced a universal, monotheistic religion. At most, there are some local folk beliefs, and most of them are not transcendent. Therefore, the Chinese civilisation is considered to be a highly secular civilisation without religious features. These consensus only express the phenomenon and the default

¹ Zhao Tingyang. Can the Vortex Model Interpret China as China? [EB/OL]. (2016-06-30)[2021-12-20]. http://culture.ifeng.com/a/20160630/49270340_0.shtml.

conclusions based on the phenomenon. Adequate explanations need full physical evidence. The Great Wall of China and the cultural values inherited and represented by the Great Wall can best confirm these three consensuses from another aspect. First of all, the Great Wall provides the most significant measure of continuity, spanning thousands of kilometres from the east to the west without interruptions and across thousands of years without falling. Secondly, various ethnic groups have mingled inside and outside the Great Wall. There may have been wars, but mostly tolerance and compatibility with one another. The Great Wall has thus created a relatively fixed geographical space for ethnic integration. Lastly, the Great Wall conveys a kind of national spirit and belief, and this spirit represents China itself. In other words, the Great Wall is the object of the Chinese people's spiritual faith. The Great Wall is China's sacred belief. Heading north on the vast land from any place, you can inadvertently run into the Great Wall. The most expansive and towering skyline occupies nearly all the dangerously inaccessible positions and undulates violently with the rolling mountains. Looking afar from the Great Wall, we can never see the end of it. The battlements, beacon towers, and bastions repeatedly stretch along the Wall according to a certain fixed rhythm. Repetition tends to make the building seem monotonous and boring. But the Great Wall's designers knew how to express fascination through repetition. Endless repetition gives the stone walls earth-shaking power, echoing the Great Wall's majestic momentum as if displayed by thousands of troops and horses. Therefore, from whichever angle you look at the Great Wall, you'll see an imposing manner imbued

with a spirit that can conquer everything and every heart in the world. It is the "Remains of Time"¹ and the presence of the past. But it's always alive in the hearts of today's people and deeply rooted in the emotions of every descendant of the Chinese Nation. In the deepest recess of the Chinese people grows and expands the visible and the invisible Great Wall. It projects the most primitive code of the Chinese national destiny and cultural heritage.

According to Zhao Tingyang's "vortex model" theory, in the early days, various ethnic peoples around the central part of China fighting for the greatest material benefits and spiritual resources formed a dynamic "vortex," with the Central Plains as the core. Once the vortex was formed, it had an irresistible centripetal force and self-reinforcing power, making it difficult for most participants to leave. Nor, indeed, were they willing to depart. They eventually formed a giant whirlpool that has defined the scale of China's existence and the concept of its substantiveness.

The "vortex model" explains why the ancient China, though not expansionary, could continuously expand. The secret is that China's demographic and territorial growth did not come from the dividends of outward expansion but from the gifts of the peripheral competitive forces continuously pulled into the centre of the whirlpool.

The formation of the Chinese vortex was related to the contentions for core leadership and the invention of the "order under heaven" simultaneously. The "order under heaven" was an all-inclusive system that could resolve the fierce conflicts rising from the vortex. It created a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic coexistence model and an integration model concerning the separation of different powers. Even after

1 Zhu Yong, *A Tale of Two Cities: A Record of the Great Wall* [M]. Beijing: Forbidden City Press, 2009.



The Cloud Platform at the Juyongguan Pass (2021)

its end, the spirit of the “order under heaven” system has transformed into the Chinese state’s internal structure as a legacy, giving rise to a unified, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic country. In essence, the so-called grand unification is a country with “heaven” (the world) as its internal structure.

Therefore, if the Yellow River is the mother river that gave birth to the Chinese Nation, the Great Wall of China is the totem of the unified patriarchal spirit since the day it was built. While building the Great Wall on its land, the Chinese people also created a “Great Wall” in their mind: the robust and unshakable sense of territory and state. For more than 2,000 years, no one has been able to separate the Great Wall from the Chinese perception and therefore failed to divide the Chinese Nation. Standing on the top of thousands of mountains, the Great Wall connects to the sky, so it is in line with Zhao Tingyang’s belief that the Chinese Nation’s internal structure has always fitted the pattern of order under heaven. As a result, China has become a divine entity and a belief, which can account for the issue of Chinese spiritual belief. It is, therefore, the place to accommodate civilisation, and it is unequivocal evidence for self-confirmation.

There is no covenant between Man and God in the Chinese culture. So, there is indeed no religion in the Western sense. But the Chinese enjoy another form of belief, *i.e.*, the match between the way of Man (*rendao*) and the way of Heaven (*tiandao*). And a wall connects those two ways. According to Franz Kafka, “The achievements of the Great Wall are by no means inferior to the Tower of Babel.” Unlike the vertical Tower of Babel, the Great Wall is a horizontal wonder spanning as far as the land itself spreads. Only the land is qualified to measure the Great Wall. Deep in the wall, the Chinese spirit is hidden but not shown, acquiesced but unknown. The Chinese

spiritual belief concerns China itself. In other words, China is the faith of the Chinese people. Just as the Great Wall, when it is fading out of people’s vision, its end is precisely its rebirth. From this perspective, to understand the Great Wall’s spiritual meaning and tap its cultural value, it isn’t difficult to perceive its significant cultural function of inheriting and carrying forward the Chinese culture. Just as Fei Xiaotong, a Chinese anthropologist and sociologist, pointed out, “The Chinese Nation, as a conscious national entity, emerged during its confrontation with the Western powers in the past century. But as a free national entity, it was formed several thousand years ago. When the Great Wall fades away, the mountains and rivers are becoming gentler, which is also changing our view and perspective of the Great Wall.

That is the result of the cultural backgrounds and spiritual pursuits of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. That’s also the logical connotation tolerated and defended by the Great Wall. Among ancient Chinese buildings, except for Taoist temples, only the Great Wall was built on mountaintops. The Great Wall was built for defence, whereas Taoist temples were built for the world outlook of Man being an integral part of Nature. The Chinese prefer locating Buddhist temples in the depth of serene mountains and Confucian temples in places of bustling activities. Living in harmony with nature is essential for human security. That is the concept of “Man being an integral part of Nature” embodied by the Taoist thinking: “Man takes his law from Earth; Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is.” What people need more is social peace and order, which echoes what is said in *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*): “To him who holds in his hands the Great Image (of the invisible Tao), the whole world repairs. Men

resort to him and receive no hurt, but (find) rest, peace, and the feeling of ease.” The Great Wall’s gently curvaceous body winds on top of meandering mountaintops. It looks angular but also smooth like flowing water at once. Even though the walls are aging, the once majestic passes of the Great Wall can still bless people with ample time and space to enjoy, giving them the chance and reason to comprehend how their homeland can last in peace for so long.

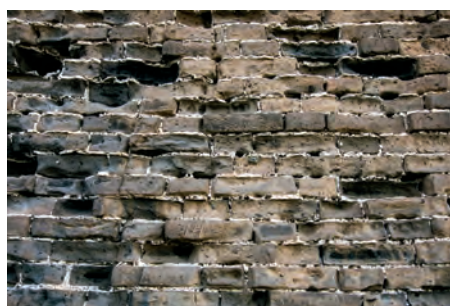
Safeguarding our Spiritual Home

The Great Wall promotes the pluralistic integration of the Chinese Nation. The natural terrain with mountains and rivers and the Great Wall, an artificial architectural structure, set up a platform for human activities centred on military affairs. Historically, people’s attention was mainly paid to the critical battles that occurred in the past dynasties along the Great Wall, the military manoeuvres of the troops at war, and the key participants in battles. Billowing smoke, fluttering banners, glistening swords, and neighing warhorses have forged the moving and heroic cultural connotation of the Great Wall.

The reason why the Chinese Nation has the largest population, and comes with the longest history in the world lies in its continuity and all-inclusiveness, the cause of which is the source of its driving force. And the Great Wall, which stretches for thousands of kilometres, is precisely the most endogenous power system and an essential link to the realisation of China’s unification. As a border wall in the northern region, the Great Wall formed a perfect geographic barrier with the plateaus and mountains in the northwest and southwest. It has provided a favourable external environment for the Chinese Nation to expand from a small region of the Xia Dynasty to its surroundings

and created a peaceful development environment for its formation. Any regime, be it farming or nomadic, would consciously or unconsciously hope to unify China after dominating the Central Plains. The prerequisite for unifying China was to cross the Great Wall and integrate into the Central Plains. The Great Wall, at the junction of the farming and nomadic civilisations, helped establish an order to maintain their regular communications. The exchange and integration between different ethnic groups jointly inherited and developed Chinese civilisation. The Great Wall is a ribbon of integration binding the Chinese Nation, laying a good foundation for the Chinese society to form a pluralistic, unified, multi-ethnic country. Therefore, the Great Wall is a cultural node and an essential historical and spiritual carrier of the Chinese Nation’s spirit and culture. It embodies its unique values and spiritual connotations and is the core release of the essence of the Chinese culture. It represents not only the most advanced productivity in the world at that time but also a high degree of self-confidence and prosperity of an advanced culture.

The higher the cultural level of a nation, the better the overall stability of the nation and the stronger the national consciousness. The formation of the military, social, and cultural functions of the Great Wall has always been accompanied by the Chinese Nation’s survival and reproduction and the Chinese people’s joys and sorrows. The entire history of the Great Wall is one of national development, and the evolution of its functions also reflects the nation’s development. The areas along the Great Wall were initially sparsely populated, and the land was barren. Many people entered the area as the past feudal dynasties implemented the *tuntian* (garrison soldiers and civilians to reclaim wasteland) policy. This migration also brought in the production



The Gubeikou section of the Great Wall (2021)

methods of the Central Plains. At the same time, the Great Wall's construction prevented looting from becoming the norm and established a good order for trade. Farming peoples farmed the land "inside" the Great Wall while nomads grazed "outside." The two normally traded through thousands of the Great Wall passes. Only in this way could they achieve symbiosis, coexistence, and integrated development. The challenging living environment and rough agricultural production mode helped the people along the Great Wall

develop their cultural characters, such as bearing hardships, working hard, constantly striving for self-improvement, advocating peace; opposing war; and respecting loyalty, filial piety, and benevolence. Those have become essential genes of the Chinese culture. "The people are the creators of history and the fundamental force that determines the future and destiny of the Party and the country." Due to its people-centredness, the Great Wall can stay rejuvenated all the time. Only by understanding the Great Wall's

affinity to people and its development can we fathom the Great Wall's significance and value to serve today's economic and social development better. In the future, the human civilisation will inevitably develop to a point where regional civilisations including the Chinese one will increasingly be integrated. The human civilisation will undoubtedly shift from pluralism to integration, forming a new pattern of pluralised integration. We're witnessing major changes unfolding in our world, something unseen in a century. On the one hand, global integration has become a worldwide historical trend. On the other hand, all kinds of contradictions, disputes,

and conflicts between countries worldwide have emerged one after another. With the rapid development of economy, culture, science, and technology and the deep mutual penetration of economy and culture, the strengthening of the integration of economy and culture has increasingly become a trend. Therefore, it's more necessary for us to grasp the Great Wall's cultural values of a national community and a nation-state community from the vantage point of a global community of a shared future. In this regard, further understanding and interpreting the Great Wall is of great practical and far-reaching historical significance.





The Dushikou section of the Great Wall (2017)

Protection and Inheritance of the Great Wall Heritage

The protection of historical and cultural heritage sites proves difficult worldwide. However, the protection of historical and cultural heritage as grand as the Great Wall, which covers such a vast area and entertains such a profound connotation is much more difficult. Therefore, the practice and research invested in caring for the Great Wall are to provide a Chinese plan to protect cultural relics and heritage in the world.

Strengthening Planning and Guidance and Making Conservation an Uncompromisable Principle

The Great Wall culture directly manifests excellent Chinese traditional culture and is an essential cornerstone for its long-term existence and development. Priority has always been given to the protection of this treasure house on the lofty mountains. In September 2017, the Beijing Municipal Master Plan (2016–2035)

approved by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council clearly states that Beijing is designated as the country's political, cultural, international exchange, and scientific and technological innovation centre. To construct a cultural centre, we should make full use of the advantages of Beijing's profound cultural heritage and the concentration of cultural resources. It will strengthen the protection of historical and cultural sites and enhance the urban characteristics of the capital, the charm of the ancient capital, and the style of the times. It proposes the construction of a historical and cultural city protection system featuring four levels, two key points, three cultural belts, and nine aspects. The Plan of Beijing for Protecting and Developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) is a special plan concerning the Great Wall Cultural Belt, one of the three cultural belts proposed by the Beijing Municipal Master Plan (2016–2035).

The Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing traverses the ecological conservation area in northern Beijing. It is based on the Yanshan and Taihang mountains and strung by the Chaobai River, the Yongding River, the Wenyu River, and the Jianhe River, extending in a main line composed of the walls of the Great Wall in a banded layout.

The spatial layout of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is to comprise “one line, five areas, and multiple points.” The “five areas” refer to the five core areas used for tourist groups. They serve as centralised showcase areas to relieve the pressure of tourists from the open scenic spots of the Great Wall. Tang Yuyang reveals that the *Great Wall National Culture Park* being planned now requires that there should be four major functional areas: the control and protection area, the theme display area, the integrated cultural and tourism integration area, and the traditional utilisation area. Meanwhile, the “five areas” will be developed into five themed display areas. Then, each area will contain a core display park, a feature showcase centre, and a display belt. The content displayed will be “updated” continuously.

The Plan has sorted out the value of the Great Wall in Beijing from six aspects: (1) representation of the Great Wall in China; (2) the unique geographical environment; (3) the highly uniform natural and human landscapes in the transitional zone of farmers and nomads; (4) a perfect reflection of ancient China’s defence system in the northern frontier; (5) the ancient Chinese people’s wisdom embodied in the selection of the sites, planning, the selection of construction materials, and construction technologies; and (6) the patriotic national spirit of fearing no death in the face of foreign aggression inspired during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. It particularly emphasises that the Great Wall in

Beijing is the most well-preserved, valuable, complex and culturally rich section of those running through 15 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. It is the most outstanding representative of the Great Wall of China.

The Plan crystalised the value of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing into the following aspects: (1) The Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing demonstrates the rich cultural diversity of this area and reflects the distinctive humanistic characteristics of this belt, so it has the function of embodying the Chinese culture, showcasing cultural heritage and vitality, and becoming the growth point of the Great Wall culture; (2) With the Great Wall Cultural Belt traversing the ecological conservation area in northern Beijing, the Great Wall here has a profound impact on the relationship between Man and the Earth in this geographic area, presenting the unparalleled landscape of perfect unity of man and nature; and (3) The Great Wall Cultural Belt is an essential part of the overall value of Beijing as a famous historical and cultural metropolis and a representative area for the sustainable use of history, culture, and natural ecology. It plays an active role in advancing the construction of a green development pilot zone liveable and suitable for business in northern Beijing and developing historical and cultural tourism and the ecological leisure industry.

During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Great Wall was written into the future national anthem as a spiritual symbol of the Chinese Nation, closely linking the Chinese Nation’s past, present, and future. We care and maintain this particular area to provide a more stable social environment for carrying forward cultural heritage and protecting the ecosystem so that our posterity can continue to enjoy it.

Highlighting the Great Wall's Functions and integrating its Cultural Heritage Resources

The value of the Great Wall in Beijing is time-honoured and as new as it used to be. It hasn't lost its significance due to the weakening of its original functions. Instead, it's becoming increasingly vital. The rich spiritual value imparted to the Great Wall in different eras is an essential support for it, allowing it to maintain its vitality and develop continuously.

Just as the *European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* stated in 1975, "The past as embodied in the architectural heritage provides the sort of environment indispensable to a balanced and complete life... The architectural heritage is a capital of irreplaceable spiritual, cultural, social, and economic value. Each generation places a different interpretation on the past and derives new inspiration from it. This capital has been built up over the centuries; the destruction of any part of it leaves us poorer since nothing new that we create, however fine, will make good the loss."¹ As an indispensable part of us human beings, every section of the Great Wall today must be passed on to future generations in its original state and as many types as possible. Otherwise, the continuity of our Nation's consciousness itself will be destroyed. For this reason, we must pay more attention and give full play to the essential function of the Great Wall, a historical and cultural heritage, and make it our oldest historical "living witness." Understanding and sorting out this function is conducive to the protection and utilisation of the Great Wall. Generally speaking, the Great Wall in Beijing has the following functions.

The function of shaping people's mind through education. The Great Wall is an outstanding historical and cultural heritage, and it occupies an important position in the history of China and the world's civilisations. The Great Wall in Beijing has built a bridge for us connecting the past and the present. It also provides indispensable spiritual nourishment for us to advance from today to tomorrow. It is an important carrier for enhancing national self-confidence, patriotism education, and spiritual civilisation construction.

The function of textual research. A historical and cultural heritage embodies the predecessors' comprehension and utilisation of the nature and laws of things. The Great Wall in Beijing provides scholars with precious first-hand material about the Chinese culture and the culture of Beijing. It reflects the level of productivity, science and technology, and people's creativity under the social conditions at that time. It's of great research significance.

The function of aesthetic cultivation. The artistic connotation of the Great Wall in Beijing is rich and gives people aesthetic enlightenment and enjoyment. Giving full play to the tourist function of the Great Wall in Beijing is a significant manifestation of its aesthetic function. However, to reap long-term benefits, priority must be given to protecting the Great Wall and using it scientifically and rationally to realize sustainable development.

The function of industrial innovation. We must integrate the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing with the capital's current economic and social development. Then, consequently, we can foster creative transformation and innovative development, form cultural products with

¹ Zhong Song. *Selection of International Charter and Domestic Laws and Regulations for the Protection of Urban Cultural Heritage*[M]. Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007.



The Gubeikou section of the Great Wall (2021)

national characteristics with the elements of the Great Wall as the core, and give play to the function of industrial innovation.

The function of safeguarding the ecosystem. The Great Wall in Beijing has two functions in ecological sense: cultural ecology and natural ecology. The former means that the Great Wall in Beijing plays an irreplaceable role in the inheritance and development of the Chinese culture. Once it disappears, it will cause an imbalance in the cultural ecosystem. “Excellent traditional culture is the foundation on which a country or a nation carries forward the past and develops it in the future. Any loss would cut off its spiritual lifeline.” The Great Wall in Beijing is a crucial ecological conservation area in the Beijing and even the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. We must bring into play its functions of conserving water and soil, regulating the climate, and protecting the natural habitats for animals and plants.

At the same time, we must also realize that the Great Wall is a linear cultural heritage. The formation and realisation of its functions have the unique characteristics of linear cultural heritage. Linear cultural heritage features tangible and intangible integrity, the decentralisation of cultural resources, and a large temporal-spatial scale. These characteristics dictate that the functions of the Great Wall in Beijing must be brought into play with importance attached to an in-depth investigation into its connotative meaning, the integration of resources, and the collaboration across regions.

The release of the Plan of Beijing Municipality for Conservation & Development of the Great Wall Cultural Belt (2018–2035) signifies that we can’t look at the Great Wall from the perspective of its length only. Instead, we must also consider its scope of space: Previously, during resource surveys, the area

demarcated was three kilometres on each side of the primary line of the Great Wall. Still, there will be additional resources like beacon towers. Today, professional departments have adopted a broader “perspective” when sorting out the Great Wall resources and, simultaneously, taking into account the relevant functions, space, and culture. The currently promulgated Great Wall in Beijing measures 520.77 kilometres and runs through the six districts of Pinggu, Miyun, Huairou, Yanqing, Changping, and Mentougou. Some experts have claimed that when looking up a historical map of the Great Wall in Beijing, they found that there used to be a wall in Fangshan District. The alleged discovery is worthy of further study.¹ With the development of archaeological work, there will be more Great Wall-related resources.

In addition, surveys need to be carried out to make an inventory of the heritage sites and resources related to the Great Wall’s revolutionary past and the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, to identify possible problems in conservation, and to search for new cultural routes. It is necessary to unearth the stories behind these sites and routes. In short, people’s understanding of the Great Wall in the past was mostly limited to cultural relic protection. In fact, everyone, including the staff engaged in the protection and inheritance of cultural remains, is not just a guardian or defender of them but the inheritor and advocate of the Great Wall culture and spirit. Therefore, the Great Wall not only symbolizes the areas along it but is also an evident and unique sign conveying a totem of extraordinary spiritual power. Thus, the protection of the Great Wall involves the connotation of its geographical

environment, economic production, military politics, and ethnic culture. It also requires a thorough investigation into the protection effort from both spiritual and cultural perspectives. The probe precisely determines the main composition of the Great Wall cultural factors. The composition possesses and reflects the most significant value and significance to the geographical space reflecting the cultural factors of the Great Wall and the various ethnic groups living there along with the social and cultural complex they have created.

Valuing Conservation and Utilisation, Focusing on Spiritual Inheritance

Authenticity and integrity are the two principles of world heritage protection. To protect the Great Wall, we cannot just pay attention to the authenticity and integrity of its conservation. We must emphasise its outstanding value, its construction techniques and complexity, and the rich culture along it, so that we can make the Beijing sections the most representative and essential of the Great Wall of China at large. As a historical and cultural heritage, the Great Wall proper is unique and non-renewable. Still, the potential of its multi-dimensional functions and values can be tapped into and developed. From the point of view of cultural heritage’s value and function, the two are both related and different. The value of cultural heritage depends on how significant a role it plays, and its value changes with the deepening of people’s understanding of the role. Therefore, only when it plays the comprehensive role as a historical and cultural heritage can the Great Wall in Beijing fully reflect its value. Only by further understanding the Great Wall’s unique value, especially by

1 Nearly 5,000 Square Kilometres! Beijing Will Issue a Protection Plan for the Great Wall National Culture Park [EB/OL]. (2020-08-09)[2021-12-20]. http://k.sina.com.cn/article_1893892941_70e2834d02000t8wm.html.

delving into and probing its spiritual value, can we bring the Great Wall's role as cultural heritage into full play. It is an issue of what model we will use to bring into full play the functions of the Great Wall to highlight its value. It is also the purpose and significance of the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. As we construct the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must balance between "soul and body" and between social and economic benefits to do a better job of protecting, inheriting, and developing the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing.¹

On the one hand, it is necessary to protect and repair the Great Wall's architectural structure so that the value of the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing can be passed on. The existence of the Great Wall itself is valuable because it's the source of Chinese civilisation. Keeping the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing intact and authentic is an essential part of building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. The Great Wall needs to be protected as a whole, and it is particularly vital to rush-repair the architectural structure, effectively protecting its essential components. Where the Great Wall sections have collapsed or disappeared in history, their sites must be protected in their original state instead of reconstructing or restoring them on a large scale.

On the other hand, while paying attention to protecting the Great Wall's architectural structure, we must extend the scope of protection to include the numerous individual folk resources along the Great Wall, such as the historical relics, residential buildings,

historical events, and folk customs, connecting them into a more valuable cultural area. We must focus on the combination of crucial points, linear layouts, and areal sites. We must shift static protection to dynamic protection and utilize the relics creatively to promote the development of the areas along the Great Wall while demonstrating the Great Wall's architectural structures. To protect and use the Great Wall heritage this way, we must not set our eyes on the remains only. We must preserve them in combination with the rich and colourful culture of the area along the Great Wall. To do an excellent job in cultural dissemination, we must focus on transforming cultural resources into tangible cultural projects that can be experienced. The value of the Great Wall cultural remains isn't equal to the value of tourism. "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets." To turn the former into the latter requires transformations. Many cultural remains and heritages, related historical and cultural resources, red tourism resources, and intangible cultural heritages are distributed along the Great Wall. They are significant resources for the integrated development of the Great Wall culture and tourism.

In recent years, China has spared no effort to protect the cultural heritage of the Great Wall and has achieved remarkable results. President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to protecting the Great Wall and has issued a series of important instructions. The CPC Central Committee and the State Council have made unified arrangements to continue promoting the exploration and practice of the Great Wall's protection. The National Cultural Heritage Administration, in conjunction with local governments of the areas along the Great Wall, has established a legal

1 The Education, Cultural, Healthcare, and Sports Committee of the Beijing CPPCC and International Institute for Urban Development, *the "Comprehensive Volume" of The Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2018.

system with the Regulations on the Protection of the Great Wall as the mainstay and local special regulations as complementation. It also issued the Report on the Protection of the Great Wall. The report has re-examined the Great Wall's value and explored and distilled the spirit of the Great Wall of China to enhance the whole country's awareness of protecting it. It has strengthened the top-level design, established the Great Wall conservation master plan system, put forward the overall strategy of protecting the Great Wall in its original state, and formulated the work policy of preserving and maintaining the Great Wall at large, rush-repairing parts of it, and strictly controlling repair and restoration projects. As a result, Beijing has launched nearly 600 conservation, renovation, and excavation projects, built demonstrative model structures for research and protection, such as the Jiankou section of the Great Wall in Beijing and the Xifengkou section of the Great Wall in Hebei Province. It has also intensified professional training and encouraged the public to participate in the Great Wall's protection, enhanced the ability and proficiency to protect and manage the protection of the Great Wall and promoted the Wall to Wall: Hadrian's Wall and Great Wall of China Management Seminar to build a bridge of exchanges and mutual learning, providing valuable experience for transnational cooperation in the protection of world cultural heritages.

On the evenings of July 22 and 23, 2021, the 44th UNESCO World Heritage Conference reviewed and approved China's world-heritage-protection status report on six sites, including the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor; the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa; the Historic Centre of Macao; the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape; the Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains; and the Great Wall of China, rated it as a model case of protection and management by the World Heritage Committee. It's the second time China's world heritage protection and management work won this honour after the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal in 2018. In its resolution, the World Heritage Committee highly appraised the active and effective measures taken by the Chinese government to protect the Great Wall and its outstanding universal value. It appreciated the Chinese government's promotion of building the Great Wall National Culture Park and promulgating and implementing the Great Wall Conservation Master Plan. It also praised China's efforts and results in public communication and marketing, building heritage site capacity, enacting special protection laws, applying modern technology, promoting international exchanges and cooperation, and relieving tourism pressures.

Keeping the Great Wall Culture Alive, Making it Shine and Thrive

The time-honoured Great Wall, like the dragon symbolising Chinese ancestry, has helped shape the soul of the Chinese culture. The Great Wall is the shared wealth of all humankind. We must protect it so it can be passed on from generation to generation and used forever is the historical responsibility of the Chinese Government and people. Every brick or clod of earth on the Great Wall records rich historical information, contains abundant cultural connotations, and demonstrates the spiritual genes of the Chinese Nation.¹ “Protecting the Great Wall without connecting its history with the future equals destruction.” To do an excellent job protecting, inheriting, and using the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must properly balance between conserving and utilising historical-cultural heritage and between the historical culture and the real life.

We must also organically integrate the Great Wall’s protection, inheritance, and utilisation with the national cultural centre’s construction and the integrated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. The job of protecting, inheriting, and using the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing will be planned in a holistic manner, designed as a system, and promoted in general within the framework of building the national cultural centre and developing the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region in coordination. We must pinpoint the critical nodes for protecting, inheriting, developing, and utilising the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing to plan its construction. We must protect the original appearance of the Beijing Great Wall culture, creatively transform it, and innovatively develop it. In particular, it is necessary to closely focus on the preparations for the XXIV Olympic Winter Games hosted in 2022

¹ The Great Wall Museum of China. *An Exploration into Beijing’s Culture – A Barrier of Beijing and Its Environs: History and Culture of the Great Wall in Beijing* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Education Publishing House, 2018.



The Mid-Autumn Festival celebrated at the Juyongguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

in Beijing and Zhangjiakou and organically integrate China's excellent traditional culture with world civilisations. Our purpose is to make the Great Wall stand the test of times, show its weathered appearance, consolidate its cultural roots, and demonstrate the value of the times.

Keeping it Alive: the Great Wall Culture's Connotation Today

The Great Wall is a miracle the Chinese Nation has created in a specific geographical and historical environment. The Great Wall of China is one of the carriers of the Chinese Nation's values and social outlook. The unique ideal, wisdom, forbearance, and charm that the Great Wall embodies have added to the confidence and pride of the Chinese people and the nation. In building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must focus on digging into the humanistic spirit, values, and ideal pursuits it embodies and continue to innovate in keeping

with the times to demonstrate the Chinese culture's perpetual charm and contemporary style. We must fully exhibit our confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics and continue to accumulate more fundamental, profound, and lasting strength for developing China and the Chinese Nation. It is the cultural mission that the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing can and should undertake. The key to building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing lies in exploring a new model and path for protecting, inheriting, and using cultural heritage, effectively protecting the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall, displaying its cultural connotation, and coordinating its protection and utilisation work with regional development. Our goal is to demonstrate the value and charm of the Great Wall in building a national cultural centre serving the capital. As President Xi Jinping points out, we must "delve deeper into and better elucidate China's excellent traditional culture" and extract "the

marrow” of traditional culture that can be used to promote national rejuvenation. We should “develop it while inheriting it, and inheriting it while developing it.” We should “integrate traditional culture with our current culture so that they can perform the task of the times, *i.e.*, enlightening people.” We must “match the outstanding values and essential morals of our excellent traditional culture with the needs of today’s social development. We must enable our incredible traditional culture to take root in people’s hearts, providing solid cultural support for China’s national rejuvenation.”¹ Protecting world cultural heritage doesn’t exclude its rational use, however, developing and utilising world cultural heritage isn’t supposed to be resource consumption. We must use our cultural resources sustainably and develop their scientific, cultural, and tourism potential to promote sustainable national and regional development.

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, President Xi Jinping has made a series of important speeches on inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese culture. He emphasises, “We need to bring all collections in our museums, all heritage structures across our lands, and all records in our classics to life.”² His call to “bring to life” points out the direction for protecting cultural heritage and makes an inherent requirement for promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilisations. The depth of understanding determines the pattern and blueprint for building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. Accelerating its construction is an inevitable requirement for realising the two centenary goals and the Chinese Dream

of the rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. It’s a crucial measure for strategically building Beijing into a world-class, harmonious, livable metropolis. As our great socialist motherland’s capital, Beijing stands at an important position in realising our dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. We must build the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing from this point of view: we must adhere to the Chinese culture, base ourselves in contemporary Chinese reality, take advantage of the conditions available in the current era, and persist in creative transformation and innovative development. We must pay equal attention to protecting the Great Wall and the overall protection of the region, synchronise the conservation of the various sections and that of the Great Wall of China at large, and balance the “win-win” relationship between the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and regional development. Our ultimate purpose is to develop the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing while protecting it. First of all, we must protect the Great Wall’s architectural structure and appearance as a world cultural heritage. We must, first of all, bring the cultural remains “to life” with dignity, which is a prerequisite for their effective use. We must put research first and do a better job interpreting and exhibiting the content. Then, we must engage the residents living in areas along the Great Wall in building the culture park as participants and beneficiaries, because it’s their home.

We must adhere to the principle of holistic protection while protecting, inheriting, and using the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. For that purpose, we’ll construct a cultural environment on a larger spatial scale through

1 Shan Jixiang, Connecting Cultural Heritage with Current Life [EB/OL]. (2019-08-27)[2021-12-20]. https://epaper.gmw.cn/gmrb/html/2019-08/27/nw.D110000gmrb_20190827_4-10.htm.

2 Speech delivered by Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China at UNESCO Headquarters [EB/OL]. (2019 04-30)[2021-12-20]. http://news.cyol.com/xwzt/2019-04/30/content_18005876.htm.

the protection, inheritance, and utilisation of the Great Wall and its surrounding tangible and intangible cultural heritage – an environment with distinct primary and secondary functional structures. While protecting tangible buildings, we must intensify the protection and utilisation of intangible cultural heritage, thus integrating tangible cultural remains and historical sites with intangible historical charm. Simultaneously, we must pay attention to investigating and sorting out the cultural heritage and its connotation and cultural value and shifting our focus from conserving the physical structures alone to preserving civilisation and economic life. We must fully protect the walls, battlements, passes, beacon towers, and bastions of the Great Wall with minimal intervention, that is, without changing the cultural remains' original state to properly maintain their authenticity, integrity, and marks of a troublesome history. At the same time, we need to highlight the systematic and synergistic nature of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and involve the natural ecological landscape and regional folk culture around the Great Wall in our protection efforts. While focusing on the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we will dig deeper into the spirit of self-improvement and perseverance epitomised by the Great Wall to promote the Chinese spirit better. We must demonstrate the Great Wall's embodied inclusiveness in development and the value of pursuing a harmonious world to disseminate Chinese values better. We must also highlight the cultural connotation of the Great Wall of China fitting into the core values of socialism to better pool the Chinese people's strength.

We must promote the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing on the premise of doing everything conducive to protecting the cultural remains, with a goal of serving the public and in the direction of

demonstrating the Great Wall's historical and cultural values. We must further explore, disseminate, and promote the unique cultural value of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, bringing the value to life. We must consider the carrying capacity of the social, economic, and environmental resources along the Great Wall. We must synchronize the conservation, inheritance, development, and utilisation of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing with regional economic development, with improving the living standards for the residents in the region, with the region's rural and urban construction, and with the improvement of the area's ecosystem. We must keep coming up with effective ways to make reasonable and appropriate use of the Great Wall. We must devote ourselves to enhancing the excellent traditional Chinese culture's power of cohesion, influence, and creativity. We shall transform the ideals, values, and aesthetic styles that travel across time and space and are embodied by the Great Wall into the Chinese people's spiritual pursuits and behavioural habits, turning the Chinese society into one that embraces self-improvement and benevolence. To extend its influence is to use the Great Wall's brand to promote China's cultural "soft power" and influence. What is essential to building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is exploring new ways of disseminating the Chinese culture globally. It involves strengthening international cultural exchanges, telling Chinese stories well, making Chinese voices heard, interpreting Chinese characteristics, displaying China's image, and demonstrating an authentic, three-dimensional, and comprehensive China to the world. To increase creativity is to sort out its historical origin, the trajectory of its evolution, and the development trend and do a better job in protecting and carrying forward the Great Wall culture in building the Great Wall Cultural



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2017)

Belt in Beijing. The key to the innovative development of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is to give the Great Wall culture new meanings continuously – meanings relevant to the new era and expressed by modern means. Then, we can adapt the areas along the Great Wall, which carry the most basic cultural genes of the Chinese Nation, to the contemporary culture and coordinate it with the modern society to promote its continuous development.

Making it Shine: a New Role in Cultural Reconstruction

When inspecting Beijing in February 2014, President Xi Jinping pointed out in his speech, “We must clarify the strategic position of the city, stick to and strengthen Beijing’s core functions as the national centre for politics, culture, international exchanges, and scientific and technical innovation, thoroughly implement the strategies of advancing cultural,

technological and green development in an effort to build Beijing into a world-class city that is harmonious and liveable.” Speeding up the construction of the national cultural centre is the Central Government’s strategic positioning and requirement for Beijing. It is also the gist of what the construction of a harmonious and liveable capital metropolis means. Building a national cultural centre in Beijing is a historic opportunity and a political responsibility. It’s bound to have a profound impact on the overall development pattern of the capital in the future.

The Great Wall culture determines that the construction of the national cultural centre in Beijing is of strategic value. The Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing must be built on the premise of protecting the Great Wall culture, with inheritance and development as its goal. We must systematically sort out the cultural resources of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, explore the overall value of historical

and cultural heritage in depth, draw and direct attention, and build an integrated platform for cultural resources. We must create an 'offline' interpretation system and an 'online' display system and scientifically form three central zones: conservation, key display, and model development. We shall implement four strategies that reflect the basic laws of protecting, inheriting, and developing linear cultural heritage, build five advanced spatial clusters, and carry out six sets of key projects with high standards. We will promote the protection and utilisation of cultural heritage along the Great Wall, protect the integrity of the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, maintain the safety of the natural environment, and upgrade the Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt brand. We will build the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing into a beautiful brand name on the corridor of China's Great Wall cultural heritage so that the Great Wall culture and the Great Wall spirit can be transmitted to later generations. As China has entered a new stage of development and faces a new pattern of development, further sticking to and intensifying the effort to build a national cultural centre is a national strategic plan that Beijing must fulfil. Meanwhile, it is an excellent chance for Beijing to release its vital energy of development and an essential measure for systematically planning and upgrading Beijing's and even national cultural development standards. It will be the commanding height for Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei to reach as they are going to build themselves into world-class megalopolises over the next three decades. Beijing is the capital of China, and designation of Beijing as a national cultural centre is, in essence, to increase the scale and quality of Chinese cultural dissemination. To build a national cultural centre is tantamount to creating a

centre that leads and guides China's cultural development and enhances its quality. However, none can be accomplished without the Great Wall culture. Therefore, we must enable the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing to thrive. We must provide platforms, establish working mechanisms, devise plans, build capable teams, and carry out projects. We shall make coordinated efforts to build a platform integrating online and offline approaches and an experiential, interactive system for digital exhibition of the Great Wall culture around the spatial characteristics, historical trajectory, the Great Wall of China proper, the evolution of functions, and the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing after investigations into and analysis of historical records, cultural relics, and historical remains.

The construction of the national cultural centre in Beijing is also people-centred because of the Great Wall culture. The political centre is an essential attribute of the capital, the international communication centre is an extension of its political function, and the scientific and technological innovation centre is an assigned function. However, the cultural centre is endogenous, formed based on Beijing's historical context and cultural development, and it is the core of the development concept that puts people at the principal position. Cultural landmarks, including the Great Wall, are a people-centred externalisation and an expression of the people-centred development concept. Being people-centred is the most fundamental spirit of Chinese culture. Through planned conservation of the Great Wall, we'll not only protect the cultural heritage our ancestors passed to us but also focus on development, formulating tourism development policies that conform to the local reality. Simultaneously, we shall mobilise the people "from the bottom up" to participate in the conservation, inheritance,



The Huangyaguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

display, and utilisation of cultural relics to benefit them and lift them from poverty. All of the efforts can be boiled down to the word-expression “people-centred.” The construction of a national cultural centre in Beijing concerns the concept of a significant culture. Therefore, we must be fully aware of the fusion of culture with education, urban management, social governance, industrial development, and ecological protection. For that purpose, we must further take model innovation as the core to establish a better, full-coverage conservation and inheritance system for the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing.

Its historical context embodies the unique and extraordinary characteristics of a city. If culture is the spiritual soul of a city, then the cultural context is the legacy of the city’s spiritual heritage, which is formed by the city’s historical accumulation. President Xi Jinping gave two important speeches when inspecting Beijing in 2014 and 2017. In his speeches, he gave significant instructions relevant to Beijing’s cultural construction. He particularly emphasised that Beijing’s history and culture were a great testimony to the long history of Chinese civilisation. It was necessary to build a conservation system for famous historical and cultural cities covering the old Beijing, downtown Beijing, urban Beijing proper, and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. We must protect this world heritage with more care. To do so, we must intensify our efforts to preserve and develop the “three hills and five gardens [Xiangshan (Fragrant Hill), Yuquan (Jade Spring) and Wanshou (Longevity) hills and Jingyiyuan, Jingmingyuan, Changchunyuan and Yuanmingyuan gardens and Yiheyuan (the Summer Palace)]” well-known villages and towns, and traditional villages. We must strengthen the protection of the cultural remains, excellent modern buildings, industrial heritage, and intangible cultural heritage

to highlight the overall value of Beijing’s history and culture. We must heighten the urban characteristics of Beijing: the “capital’s majesty, its past style when ancient capital and its features of the times.” Therefore, to build a national cultural centre in the capital, we must coordinate the protection of the world cultural heritage and its economic and social development to demonstrate its characteristics of the times. Taking key tasks such as the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing as a starting point, we shall extensively carry out activities and events regarding the world cultural heritage, such as exhibitions, exchanges, and interactions, to achieve an integrated effect of the world cultural heritage. We must promote the integration of the world cultural heritage into our contemporary work and life to adapt traditional culture to contemporary culture so that it can be in harmony with modern society.

The Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is a remarkable project for the inheritance and development of excellent Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, there must be an overall goal, *i.e.*, laying a solid foundation for building a national cultural centre to contribute to the promotion of Chinese culture’s influence globally. We must promote establishing a protection and inheritance system for the Great Wall’s historical and cultural heritage as soon as possible. Simultaneously, we must advance in good coordination the research and interpretation, education and popularisation, conservation and inheritance, innovation and development, and dissemination and exchange of the Great Wall features, thus achieving significant outcomes and producing content-rich cultural works and products characteristic of the Great Wall. The heroism shown in these literary and artistic works related to the Great Wall also embodies people’s respect for the wisdom, perseverance, and hard work

of their ancestors who built the Great Wall. With the continuous evolution and enrichment of the symbolic meaning of the Great Wall, especially when the military defence function of the Great Wall gradually fades away and its cultural and spiritual effects continue to grow with time, this quality of the magnificent Great Wall becomes more prominent. It makes people feel their own greatness and strength, which is highly precious. We must pay more attention to its conservation and utilisation with this overall goal in mind, and prioritize social effects while balancing social and economic benefits. We shall set specific goals in terms of social and economic benefits. In terms of social benefits, we must first promote public welfare in building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. We must insist on using its orientation of values, results of conservation, and public satisfaction as the primary evaluation criteria. We must further explore the Great Wall's historical value, and conserve the heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing, and the historical features and national environments of its surrounding areas. We must inherit and carry forward the historical and cultural value of the Great Wall to make it a classic element and iconic symbol for the construction of the capital as the national cultural centre and demonstrate the longevity and richness of Beijing's culture. The results of the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing must withstand public evaluation and the test of history. The construction has brought new opportunities for the protection and development of the Great Wall, manifesting the holistic value of the Great Wall in Beijing. Of course, it must be noted that the Great Wall of Beijing is primarily located in the mountainous areas on the outskirts of the city Beijing, where economic and social development is relatively lagging, and the ecosystem is relatively weak. In recent years, the rise of Great Wall tourism has made

the government and local residents realize the importance of using Great Wall resources for development. But a lack of protection awareness, insufficient understanding of the Great Wall's values, and blind pursuit of short-term benefits have led to the consumption of the Great Wall resources to a certain extent. Therefore, to construct the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must scientifically develop the Great Wall resources by integrating the valuable resources in Beijing: natural environment and human landscapes. We must find ways to bring the cultural relics to "life" to promote the sustainable, overall conservation and rational development of the Great Wall in Beijing. We'll improve the natural and cultural environment in the mountainous areas of northwest Beijing and promote the coordinated development of social, economic, and cultural construction projects along the Great Wall.

Making it Thrive: Contributing to New Splendor of a World-Famous City

The Great Wall belongs to China and the world as well. Beijing is a thousand-year-old capital that has witnessed the trials and tribulations of history. The Great Wall in Beijing is an essential part of the memory and context of this ancient capital. To highlight the overall value of Beijing's history and culture, to build Beijing into a world-renowned cultural city, and to help move it toward the world's cultural centre, we must protect, explore, and utilize the cultural heritage of the Great Wall Cultural Belt. For this reason, we must appropriately position the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing in its planning and construction, racing to take the commanding position of world cultural construction and identifying the new goal. We must carefully protect the world cultural heritage of the Great Wall, inheriting



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2021)

the treasured legacy and carrying it forward. In this way, we will contribute to the city's effort towards becoming a world cultural centre.

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore once said, "The beacon of ancient Greece went out on the newly lit land, and the might of Rome was buried under the ruins of a vast empire. But civilisations based on the spiritual ideals of society and people still live in China and India... Just like a living seed, when moist rain falls from the sky, it will sprout and grow, stretch its blessed branches, bloom, and bear fruit." The historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall in Beijing should be such a seed, and we should give it the value and life of the times so that it can provide spiritual guidance for the people.

The Great Wall is a section of cultural memory cast by the flames of war fought by armoured horses and warriors. We must interpret its profound connotation from the

perspective of the national cultural centre and further explore its rich cultural heritage from the vantage point of the world cultural centre. In particular, through significant events and activities such as the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 and Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, we will bring more people from all over the world closer to the Great Wall so that they can appreciate the space in which the Great Wall exists, learn about its construction history, and get a closer look at its evolving functions. We'll, on those bases, push the Great Wall culture to the world and enhance Beijing's central position in global cultural exchanges and mutual learning. We shall conduct discussions with strategic positioning, functions, and ideas of development as a starting point so that we can provide a new perspective for the study of the planning and construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. We'll discuss the overall protection

and rational utilisation of the Great Wall in Beijing and its surrounding resources within the framework of building Beijing into a renowned world-class cultural city. The essence of building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is to assume the function of inheriting and carrying forward the Great Wall culture. This kind of cultural inheritance not only includes the protection of Beijing's historical and cultural heritage, traditional culture, and folk customs but also shoulders the historical responsibility of protecting and inheriting the excellent culture of the Chinese Nation.

At present, several leading metropolises such as Guangzhou have fully accelerated their paces to develop into world-class cultural cities and sped up the construction of regional-cultural-centre cities globally. At the 44th Session of the World Heritage Committee, China's cultural heritage project Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China was reviewed and successfully registered on the World Heritage List. The cultural values that these centres convey and express are direct testimony to China's confidence in its culture. They signify China's move to enter the world stage and accelerate the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. Therefore, we must position well the construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, carry out more activities by taking Beijing as a world cultural centre, take the initiative in foreign exchanges, and play a demonstrative and leading role. As an essential window for cultural exchanges home and abroad, Beijing should have the self-confidence and consciousness of a world cultural centre. And the majestic Great Wall is undoubtedly a calling card for Beijing to go global. What Beijing is going to do in

its construction of the Great Wall Cultural Belt is to take advantage of the strategic opportunities of the Belt and Road Initiative and the 2022 Olympic Winter Games to advance the Great Wall cultural exchanges to a higher level. We'll let more people see the beauty of the Great Wall, appreciate its soul, recognise the Chinese culture faster through the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. We will fully consider the visual effects of the various Olympic venues and their integration with the physical space of the Great Wall. We must reproduce the magnificent scenery inside and outside the Great Wall with better quality to add to the radiance of the Olympic Games venues. We must display the modern elements better to make them shine more brilliantly with history and culture. By doing so, we'll make the Olympic Winter Games venues part of the city's cultural legacy and landmarks. We'll establish a cultural and creative industry system and an innovation system that match the image and quality of the Great Wall to stimulate the vitality of cultural innovation further, lead and promote development. We'll establish a cultural creative industry system and an innovation system matching the image and quality of the Great Wall to stimulate the vitality of cultural innovation further and lead and promote development. At the same time, we'll actively carry out activities such as national or international exchange and exhibition conferences on the Great Wall and Great Wall Cultural Forum. We must strengthen the people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and the rest of the country and the world to build bridges and ties and broaden the functions of interactions.

The Great Wall National Culture Park

The Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Long March, and the Yellow River national culture parks are China's significant cultural projects. The Great Wall of China symbolizes China's long history and splendid civilisation, embodying Chinese patriotism characteristic of unity and perseverance. With the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park, the cultural genes flowing in the Chinese blood and condensed in their shared memory will present their eternal charm.

From “Wilderness” to “Parks”

A national culture park is an important symbol of the Chinese culture. On October 29, 2020, the 5th Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC passed the Proposals of the CPC Central Committee on Formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-term Goals for 2035. It proposed building national

culture parks for the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Long March, and the Yellow River.

The concept of national parks originated from the United States' protection of its “wilderness.” The concept of national culture park was first put forward by China for the purpose of protecting, inheriting, and promoting cultural resources, spirits or values with national or international significance. The national culture parks also have the cultural service functions of patriotic education, scientific practices, entertainment and recreation, and international exchanges. It is a specific sector recognised, established, supported, and supervised by relevant state departments. The basic goal of building national culture parks is to reorganise the cultural remains of outstanding significance, influence, and themes and manage them as parks. The purpose is to conserve and inherit them so that they'll have the functions of cultural education, public service, tourism,



The Dushikou section of the Great Wall (2017)

recreation, and scientific research and become a public culture carrier with a specific open space and concentrate on creating significant symbols of the Chinese culture. The main contents of the parks include setting up four different functional areas: conservation management, thematic displays, integration of culture and tourism, and traditional use. They also include the coordinated advancement of the key infrastructure projects on protection and inheritance, research and exploration, environmental support, culture and tourism integration, and digital reproduction.¹

A wilderness has a form, but a park is a unique heritage. A wilderness is a natural state without human intervention, but a park is the product of human governance. The

construction of a national culture park has far-reaching significance, which is embodied in the protection, showcase, and inheritance of the core values of the Chinese culture. The Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Long March Route and the Yellow River are all typical linear cultural heritage. Due to inadequate protection awareness and management mechanisms, we lack understanding of this type of cultural heritage. Therefore, national culture parks can enhance our knowledge and be used as a display pilot to track our resources. At the same time, building national culture parks is in line with the trend of integrating culture with tourism in China in the new era. It will become a critical carrier to promote the integration and help build an

1 Dong Yaohui. Discussion About the Guiding Ideas and Basic Principles for the Construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park [EB/OL]. (2021-01-26)[2021-12-20]. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1689912991698293931&wfr=spider&for=pc>.

improved, full-coverage protection system. In this process, we must bring into play the social synergy of historical and cultural heritage protection and continue to pay attention to the construction of the Great Wall, a site of world historical and cultural heritage. Simultaneously, we must also be deeply concerned with its close interaction with the social system. We must make overall plans and designs within the framework of sustainable development to establish a positive interaction between cultural heritage protection, coordinated economic and social development of the region, and popular spiritual and cultural needs.

Regarding their positions and protection, national parks are one of China's most important forms of nature reserves. Belonging to the main national function areas, they are zones where development is forbidden. They are included in the national red-line, management-and-control area to put the ecosystem under the strictest protection. No development activities are allowed except for the renovation of aboriginal living and production facilities and the following actions: natural sightseeing, research, education, and tourism. The national culture parks must be built based on the principle of returning the ecology, culture, and parks to the people. Their characteristics of innovation, public affairs, openness, and internationality are highlighted. Judged from the currently determined construction scope, the Beijing section of the Great Wall National Culture Park is mainly built along the Badaling-Ming Tombs scenic area (the Yanqing section). Its purpose is to promote the protection and construction of natural ecology while protecting humanistic landscape resources and form a unified and excellent ecosystem by integrating various protected areas around the Great Wall. Therefore, in planning and building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must start

from building the Beijing Great Wall National Culture Park and actively undertake the piloting task of building the Beijing Great Wall National Culture Park. Simultaneously, we'll actively prepare plans, set up mechanisms, verify and register rights and research policies. Judging from the current 10 pilot national parks, the Beijing Great Wall National Culture Park system pilot was initially selected in the area traversed by the Badaling section of the Great Wall in Yanqing District, Beijing, covering 59.91 square kilometres. The primary protected zones involved in the pilot area include the Great Wall, the Badaling-Ming Tombs scenic spot (part of Yanqing District), the Badaling National Forest Park in Beijing, and the Badaling Park in the Yanqing World Geopark in China. According to the standards established for national parks, the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing meets ecosystem representativeness, area suitability, and management feasibility requirements. Incorporating the Great Wall Cultural Belt into the national park enables exploration and experimentation in a larger space, thus playing a more significant role in establishing and improving the national park system.

We must take the opportunity of building the national culture parks to speed up the reassessment and systematic classification of the protection and management effectiveness in the existing scenic spots, nature reserves, geoparks, and forest parks planned for the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. We must identify the relationship between various nature reserves, further study their functional positioning, and make painstaking efforts to build a nature-protection system represented by national parks. There have been many scenic spots mainly based on or relying on Great Wall tourism in recent years. These scenic spots have attracted tourists who come just to become "a true man who has ever been to

the Great Wall” – a move encouraged by the famous motto: “He who has never been to the Great Wall is not a true Man.” What they get is but the feeling of “having been here.” A purpose like this tends to minimise the value of the Great Wall. The popular Great Wall attractions are even overcrowded on holidays. In addition to the appropriate development of tourism, the Great Wall National Culture Park will emphasise and demonstrate the cultural value of the Great Wall, making people realize that the Great Wall is not only a military defence project but also a bridge between civilisations and the home of our lives. That is precisely the effect that the national culture park should achieve. To this end, it’s necessary to build a theoretical and discourse system compatible with the construction of national culture parks. Simultaneously, while introducing the national culture park brand, we must link specific locations into strips and string them together into areas, creating a well-known visual image recognition system and continuously increasing the power of inheritance.¹ We must simultaneously promote the development of characteristic rural education resources, encourage qualified places to create live performances, and integrate the culture of the Great Wall and the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the spirit of the Long March into the lives of the people. We must simultaneously provide a full-cover wireless network and 5G mobile communication network to the themed exhibition areas to create an “online” service that will never fail, *i.e.*, is break-free. We shall build and improve the digital management platform for cultural remains and cultural

resources with the help of the national data sharing and exchange platform system.

We shall create a new multi-party governance pattern, by which the government does its duty, the Society is also held accountable, and everyone has his share of responsibility. Building a multi-party cooperation mechanism is a common strategy adopted by other countries, especially for linear cultural heritage that spans a long distance and involves many management units and interest groups. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal Steering Committee and the Hadrian’s Wall Management Plan Committee, both in Great Britain, and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (running from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, USA) are management organisations with multiple partners.² President Xi Jinping requests that “cultural heritage departments at all levels live up to their missions, abide by their duties, and improve their quality competence. They must also enhance their ability to conduct law-based management, involve social forces in participation, and strive to blaze a trail for the protection and utilisation of cultural remains in line with national conditions.” The construction of the Great Wall Culture Park is a non-profit undertaking. Therefore, we must encourage and attract non-governmental and international organisations to participate in protecting the Great Wall world cultural heritage. We shall keep on broadening the fund-raising channels for Great Wall protection, set up Great Wall protection public funds, explore new models such as PPPs (public-private partnerships) and crowdfunding, and attract social investment in the Great Wall protection and exhibition. Of

1 Liu Jia. National Culture Parks String These Resources Together [EB/OL]. (2021-08-14)[2021-12-20]. <http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1707969172722249025&wfr=spider&for=pc>.

2 Li Ting and Wang Simin. How to Build National Culture Parks [EB/OL]. (2019-10-09)[2021-12-20]. https://epaper.gmw.cn/gmrb/html/2019-10/09/nw.D110000gmrb_20191009_1-07.htm.



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2021)

course, for social forces to be part of the effort to protect and use the Great Wall resources, it's necessary to make procedural and institutional regulations and strengthen supervision during and after the event to avoid behind-the-scenes operations from harming public interests. We must prevent possible damage to cultural remains in the process of protection and utilisation.

We must adopt different methods and technologies to construct the Great Wall National Culture Park, tap into a broader range of resources, and turn all tourist destinations into cultural attractions along the Great Wall. We must promote its development by introducing the Great Wall culture so that these tourist destinations will become its carrier, allowing tourists to absorb the cultural value of the Great Wall and even its connotations in their travel experience.

We must prioritize the development of the regions replete with resources but relatively lagging in development. We need to highlight key points, form agglomerations, and optimise the overall development pattern to form new development poles and narrow the development gap among the regions. We'll fully consider the geographical breadth, cultural diversity, and resource differences of the areas along the Great Wall. We shall also examine the resource endowments, cultural history, and socio-economic characteristics of different regions and pay special attention to regional cultural features and resource advantages. We shall then adapt our measures to local conditions and embrace differential development, forming cultural brand names with various regional characteristics.

Cultural remains also have dignity, which must be strictly protected and used rationally.

The Great Wall National Culture Park and its protection, inheritance, and utilisation must reflect humanistic values and be conducive to rallying the consensus and strength of the whole society. Therefore, we must involve people to protect, inherit, and use the Great Wall Cultural Belt and do a good publicity job to win social support and mobilise the general public to participate in the endeavour. We must work hard to form synergy in the cause of protecting and managing the historical and cultural heritage. Being people-centred is an essential attribute of the Great Wall that distinguishes it from many world cultural heritage sites. The construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is not only the government's responsibility but also requires the joint efforts of the public. We must give full play to the enthusiasm and consciousness of the local people to protect the Great Wall, build a "People's Great Wall" to protect it, and make it more vibrant.

We must innovate in the coordinated development model of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, join our efforts to protect the Great Wall cultural remains, share our results, and strive for win-win development. President Xi Jinping points out that Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei are close to each other in terms of ancestral ties, geographical location, and cultural and historical background and within a suitable radius of communication. Therefore, they are fully capable of mutual integration and coordinated development. Under the national strategy of coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, it's the shared aspiration and responsibility of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei to inherit the Great Wall culture, promote the Great Wall spirit, and give play to the Great Wall's role. Based on the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei coordinated development plan outline and the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei tourism integration coordinated

development plan and standing on the strategic height of coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, we must establish a joint protection mechanism for the historical and cultural heritage of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei section of the Great Wall of China. We must promote history and culture research on the Great Wall's protection and inheritance in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and encourage establishing a Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei integrated conservation and utilisation system. We must share the Great Wall resources, plan transitions well, balance protection and safety, and coordinate the construction of the Great Wall of Cultural Belt in Beijing. We must jointly create a diversified, energised cultural system with the characteristics of Beijing and its environs to achieve results of joint protection. We'll share the results and strive for win-win development.

Pressing the "Fast-Forward" Button

The construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is a major cultural project. At present, whether we have a clear and concrete understanding of the National Culture Park's construction goals and whether we have a clear awareness of the target measurement are crucial to the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park. In December 2019, the general offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Plan on the Construction of the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March National Culture Parks (hereafter Construction Plan). In the same year, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism formulated the Implementation Plan for the Construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park. Both clearly defined the main objectives of building the National

Culture Park. On December 11, 2020, the Great Wall National Culture Park Construction Promotion Conference was convened in Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province. The meeting further clarified the scope, content, goal, and major tasks concerning the park's construction. Specifically, the goals of the Great Wall National Culture Park can be understood from four aspects: the completion time, construction scope, dynasties involved, and construction content. Among them, the construction content goal is the top priority. The development blueprint for the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is mainly reflected in the construction content goal.

The Construction Plan determined that most of the project would be completed by the end of 2023, while the Hebei section of the Great Wall, the Jiangsu section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Guizhou section of the Long March would be completed before the end of 2021 as key construction areas. This means that the coordination and promotion of the protection, inheritance, and utilisation of cultural relics and resources along the Great Wall would be preliminarily formed. A prototype management model with clear responsibilities, effective operation, and standardised supervision would take shape. For that purpose, it is necessary to form a batch of reproducible achievements and experiences and create favourable conditions for pushing the construction of national culture parks in full force.

The Construction Plan stipulated the geographical area and the dynasties involved. The Great Wall National Culture Park includes the facilities characteristic of a defence system in the Warring States Period, Qin, Han, Northern Wei, Northern Qi, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Western Xia, and Liao dynasties, and the Great Wall in

the Nüzhen Jin and Ming dynasties. They spread in 15 provincial-level administrative divisions: Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shandong, Henan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang. The Construction Plan clearly defined the primary goals of the construction project: four main functional zones must first be constructed based on the overall layout of cultural remains and resources, the difference in resource endowment, the surrounding human settlement, natural conditions, and supporting facilities. The four main function areas are management and control conservation zone, theme display zone, culture and tourism integration zone, and tradition utilisation zone.

The conservation and control zone is set up for protecting the Great Wall and related cultural relics. It needs to be consistent with the protection scope of the heritage site demarcated by the Great Wall protection plan. In other words, it can be larger, but no smaller than the boundary of the heritage site. Within the scope of the conservation and control zone, the Great Wall cultural remains proper must be protected, but it's also necessary to implement strict protection and control measures over the surrounding environment where the Great Wall is located.

The theme display zone takes three forms: the core display park, the centralised display belt, and the feature showcase centre. The core display park is the main body of the main function area for visits and cultural experiences. Therefore, it must be conveniently located for easy traffic access and parking. When planning core display parks in various places, we must first choose open tourist scenic spots because of their excellent geographical locations and relatively easy access. The core display park is composed of national cultural remains and resources and the surrounding areas. On this



The Qiangzilu section of the Great Wall (2021)

basis, we can consider convenient access to sightseeing, location, and traffic. That is very important because a national culture park also has the attributes of a park. In the theme display zone, the core display park must be at the core indeed. Now that we have this core display park, we also need a centralised display belt. It is crucial to the Great Wall, a linear cultural heritage. We need to pull the cultural remains resources possessed by the relevant counties, cities, and provinces together to form a centralised belt of cultural carriers. The last part of the main function area is the feature showcase centre to display some relatively scattered Great Wall-related cultural relics with special cultural significance and experience value. The featured showcase centres are relatively small or distanced from the core display park and the centralised display belt. But they are of unique cultural significance and can be built to meet the needs of a decentralised tourist experience.

The culture and tourism integration zone mainly uses the spill-over and radiation effect of the Great Wall cultural remains and resources to promote the economic development of the areas along the Great Wall. It's the main functional zone for the deep integration and development of culture and tourism in the Great Wall National Culture Park. The integration of culture and tourism needs to create a business format, rather than repainting some rural walls, building or renovating some rest rooms, setting up some tourism service centres, or building a tourist parking lot. Additionally, the integration of culture and tourism must promote the development of the tourism industry, carry out some cultural tourism programmes, manufacture some cultural tourism products, and give birth to some cultural tourism enterprises.

The tradition utilisation zone covers the areas inhabited by rural and urban residents, enterprises, public institutions, and community

organisations. It is necessary to reasonably preserve the traditional cultural ecology, appropriately develop cultural tourism, and develop characteristic ecology-oriented industries. Large-scale manufacturing and commercial operations must be placed under appropriate control, with those facilities and projects not complying with the requirements of the Construction Plan diverted gradually. In the tradition utilisation area, we must first and foremost protect the unique features. Simultaneously, we'll develop cultural tourism and featured ecological industries.

With the already released the plan of Beijing for protecting and developing the Great Wall Cultural Belt between 2018 and 2035 in mind, many people believe that the Great Wall Culture Park will have its core and bond in Beijing. Factors such as the cultural resources, environment, and infrastructure of each Province and region must be considered. Simultaneously, a belt-shaped spatial structure aiming for overall development must be constructed following the idea of holistic protection and differentiated development and using the Great Wall, natural environment, and road traffic as the development axis. According to the *Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North* (comprehensive volume) compiled by the CPPCC Beijing Municipal Committee's Commission of Education, Science, Culture, Health, and Sports and the International Institute for Urban Development, Beijing, the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park must also cover the four sections currently developed in the Great Wall Cultural Belt from west to east along the Great Wall: the Badaling-Juyongguan section, the Jiuyanlou-Mutianyu section, the Gubeikou-Simatai section, the Hongshimen-Jiangjungan section and Yanhecheng-Xiaolongmen section. More efforts will be made to build a networked, multi-grouped spatial

pattern of protection and utilisation. While protecting the historical and cultural heritage of the Great Wall as a whole, we must connect resources and gather elements on a larger scale to achieve coordinated development. We must also enhance the added cultural value of the Great Wall to serve the national cultural centre better.

The Badaling-Juyongguan Group will be set up to emphasise interpreting the intrinsic value of the Guangou in-depth defence system. The Badaling section of the Great Wall is the earliest open area of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty, and it has now become a large-scale, well-equipped Great Wall open scenic spot. Along with the Juyongguan section of the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, it constitutes a national scenic spot and has become a pilot area for the national Great Wall park at the same time. This section of the Great Wall has a significant impact on the development and utilisation of resources around the Great Wall. It's one of the five major groups built for Beijing's Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. When creating the Badaling-Juyongguan Group, we must focus on interpreting the intrinsic value of the Guangou in-depth defence system and further explore the cultures of the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall. We must create a unique cultural protection and utilisation group integrating historical and cultural conservation, tourist attraction development, technology and culture display, with world heritage as the central theme and cultural experience as the main approach.

We will create the Jiuyanlou-Mutianyu Group based on the intersection of the Great Wall section in Beijing that lead east-west and north-west. Located in Huairou District in the north of Beijing, The Jiuyanlou-Mutianyu Group is the closest to the capital's centre with a prominent geographical advantage. This group contains the Mutianyu, Jiankou, Beijing



The Jiuyanlou Great Wall (2021)

Node, Jiuyanlou, Huanghuacheng sections of the Great Wall. It also embraces the ancient Hongluo Temple and the Yunmeng Mountain scenic spot in the surrounding area. They roll lushly layer by layer in a picturesque mix, and the Jiankou section of the Great Wall is the most dangerously inaccessible. We shall facilitate the establishment of seven scenic spots: Qinglongxia, Hefangkou, Shentangyu, Mutianyu, Beijing Node and Moshikou around the “one belt, one core, three axes, and three nodes” layout proposed by Huairou District. Following the project-thinking of a sizable scenic spot and based on the characteristic scenery resources and geographical distribution, we shall create this Jiuyanlou-Mutianyu Group with the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall scenic spot at the core. We must pay particular attention to the primary role and value of the Beijing Node as the east-west and north-west hub of the Great Wall in Beijing.

With the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 as an opportunity, we’ll strengthen the protection and utilisation of the outer line of the Great Wall running to Xuanhua, Hebei, to build an international Great Wall tourist scenic spot. We’ll enhance the attractiveness of international tourism by highlighting its unique features, exploring its embedded connotations, and demonstrating the best of it.

We shall create the Gubeikou-Simatai Group to stress preserving the authenticity of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. Located in the northeast of Beijing, it reaches the Simatai and Gubeikou sections of the Great Wall before entering Miyun District from Pinggu District and turning north at Qiangzillu towards the northeast. It then turns sharply in the northeastern tip of Beijing proper and bends north to pass the Bailingguan Passing Point. This group boasts the section of the Ming Great Wall with the best construction



The Dagu Bastion (2020)

quality and the best-preserved original appearance of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. It's best known for its "strategic position, inaccessible location, unexpected features, ingenious design, and complete supporting facilities." Gubeikou Town, in particular, is a vital gateway opposite Juyongguan Pass and a critical node allowing the passage out to the Inner Mongolia Plateau from the North China Plain. Its geographical location is crucial. At present, it's a helpful attempt to combine the Great Wall culture with traditional folk culture relying on Simatai and the Gubei Water Town international tourism resort and complemented by the traditional ancient villages against the mountains and facing the rivers, a landscape formed by the Yuanyang Lake Reservoir. In building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, We shall make painstaking efforts to create a display area that integrates the Great Wall's cultural heritage, history, culture, ancient villages' folk culture, and natural

landscape. We'll do this by relying on the Simatai scenic area, Yunyougu nature reserve, and the Wuling Mountain nature reserve. We shall also tap into the Great Wall's potential usefulness, develop special interest tourism projects such as the Great Wall sports-and-fitness tours and the Great Wall photography tours. Simultaneously, we will tell also tell the story of the Great Wall to promote its culture to enhance the influence of its Beijing section at home and abroad.

We shall create the Hongshimen-Jiangjungan Group with the genetic and cultural affinity of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei at the core. The Pinggu section of the Great Wall is the starting point where the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty leads to Beijing, and it boasts a unique location and gorgeous scenery along the way. The Hongshimen section of the Great Wall in Jinhaihu Town, is located at the junction of Pinggu District in Beijing, Xinglong County in Hebei Province, and Jizhou District in Tianjin. It's the only

section of the Great Wall that “runs in three provincial-level regions.” The boundary tablet at the No.1 Battlement on the Hongshimen section of the Great Wall that enters the east end of Beijing testifies this particular geographic property of this part of the Great Wall. Jiangjunguan was the first critical pass for the Ming Great Wall to enter and defend Beijing. The section of the Great Wall in this group is piled up mostly with mountain rocks with crude craftsmanship, which is rare in Beijing. However, constructed at dangerously inaccessible places, this section of the Great Wall proves to be an essential military barrier in the east of Beijing. We must protect and utilize the Hongshimen-Jiangjunguan Group. In the process, we’ll prioritize the badly damaged part of the Pinggu section of the Great Wall when carrying out repair projects between Hongshimen and Jiangjunguan and build a great scenic area featuring stone Great Wall. At the same time, we will take advantage of the junction where Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei meet and innovate in collaboration. We will dig deeper into the Great Wall resources and build the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cultural product brand through fieldwork along the Great Wall. We will create Great Wall literary works, collect Great Wall stories, make Great Wall documentaries, and organise Great Wall symposiums. We’ll intensify publicity efforts to tap the historical value of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty with its unique characteristics through such large-scale marketing events as the Cultural Heritage Day, temple fairs, and the Peach-blossom Music Festival.

We shall create the Yanhecheng Group to focus on the joint development of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and the Xishan-Yongdinghe Cultural Belt. Yanhecheng was one of the well-preserved Ming Great Wall battlements in Mentougou District.

It was a strategic frontier fortress and one of the important passes in the west of the capital during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Mentougou District lies in the Beijing Great Wall Cultural Belt and the Xishan-Yongding River Cultural Belt. Situated in the Yongding River Canyon and surrounded by mountains, it leans against Chengzituo Village in the south and neighbors the Yongding River in the north. We must focus on the joint development of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and the Xishan-Yongding River Cultural Belt relying on the ecosystem along the section of the Yongding River meandering through Yanchi and Miaofengshan. The area extends from the plains, to the hills, then to the mountains. It also boasts vegetation, an excellent environment, gorgeous landscapes, the Great Wall relics, traditional villages, and the Yongding River drainage.

We shall speed up the implementation of several essential protection and repair projects to focus on building the National Great Wall Culture Park. Protection is a prerequisite for building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. Protecting historical and cultural heritage begins with the cultural relic itself. We must strictly abide by the principle of not changing the original state of cultural relics and the policy of minimal intervention. We shall further improve the management mechanism related to protecting and repairing the Great Wall, intensify the investigation of the Great Wall resources, and accurately grasp the characteristics of each section of the Great Wall. The protection and repair projects are expected to keep every tree, brick, or tile of the Great Wall in its original historical state. We must further standardise Great Wall protection signs, install warning signs, border posts promptly as per the requirements of the National Cultural Heritage Administration’s Guiding Rules & Regulation on the Work of

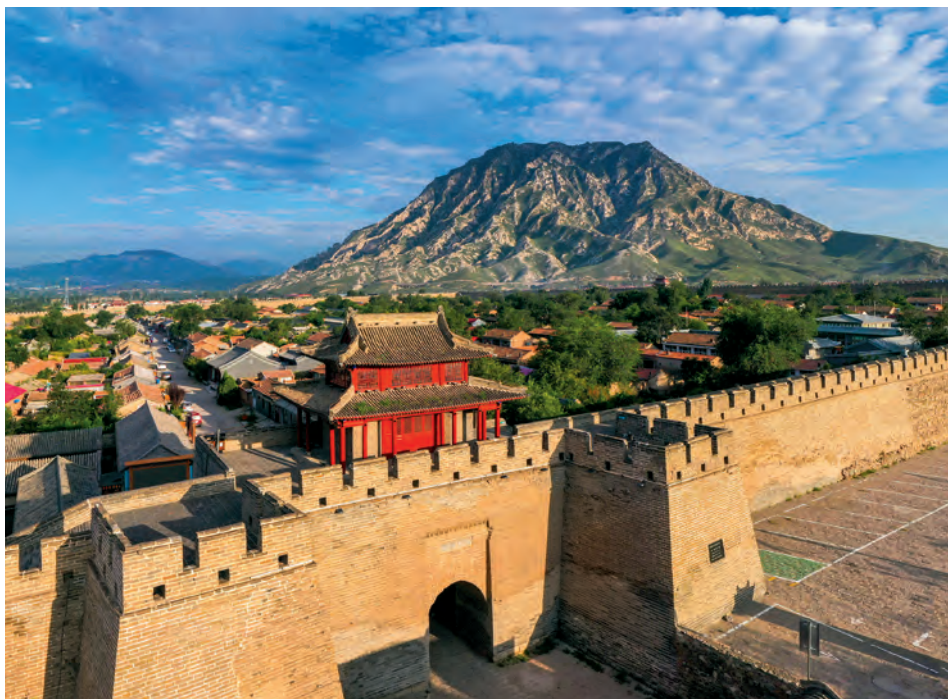
the Great Wall. We must rush to repair and reinforce the areas on the verge of destruction, renovate key areas, and build protective facilities such as plank roads at specific places to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the Great Wall in Beijing. We must do so according to the principle of “repair ancient remains and model after what they used to be,” with the focus on protection and repair.

In addition, relying on the Great Wall National Culture Park and based on the existing museums, memorial halls, and exhibition halls of the Great Wall of China, we’ll establish some significant centres for national research on the Great Wall for its display and brand marketing and set up some essential publicity and education showcase facilities to better inform foreigners to the Great Wall. We shall speed up upgrading and transforming the Great Wall Museum of China by enriching it with more cultural connotations intrinsic to the Great Wall. We shall also introduce the concept of ecological museums, integrate indoor and outdoor displays, and continuously improve the Great Wall Museum of China to make it a world-class centre for Great Wall exhibition, academic research, and cultural exchange. We plan to build several Great Wall theme parks, ecological museums, and cultural heritage parks with a view of visually and systematically displaying the Great Wall’s construction history and its characteristics, development trends, and related myths and legends. We shall promote the construction of a Great Wall museum in the west of the capital, dig into the cultural heritage of the Great Wall in west Beijing, and create a brand name for the culture of the Great Wall’s inner line. We shall build and upgrade some patriotic education centres to integrate the Red Culture, the military culture, and the Great Wall culture. We shall also promote the integration of the profound Great

Wall culture with its great spirit of resisting Japanese aggression. We shall develop and market digital products regarding the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and pilot the construction of “smart” museums. We shall use modern technology to digitally restore the Great Wall ruins and bring them to life through cellphone and computer software, providing an experience of being on the scene to appreciate “living” Great Wall culture.

In building the Great Wall National Culture Park, we must pay more attention to building the intangible and “soft power.” We shall actively cultivate some cultural exchange brand names regarding the Great Wall based on the national culture park. The Great Wall is the most recognised Chinese cultural symbol in the international community. We must take the opportunity of building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing to participate in international cultural heritage protection. We shall expand cooperation with relevant international organisations, and demonstrate our confidence in the Chinese culture and the charm of Beijing’s culture in foreign exchanges and in showcasing the Great Wall.

We shall plan a set of Great Wall-related literary works and art productions. President Xi Jinping emphasises, “Art is the clarion call for the advancement of the times, and it can best represent the style and lead the trend of an era.” Cultural activities are an essential starting point to enhance the influence and visibility of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. There are many written records, poetry, prose (including rhapsodies, maxims, notes, and odes), folktales, legends, and novels, among the wealth of Chinese historical classics. They presented the Great Wall of China in literary forms in early times. Paintings, sculptures, music, dramas, dances, and other art forms portrayed the Great Wall in unique formats and styles. Other art forms



The Jiuming Relay Station (2021)

like photography, cinema, and television also boast many works to reflect social lives and express the pursuit of ideals through representing the Great Wall. It's fair to say that there have been no other works to portray a building with greater timespan, a greater number of volumes, broader coverage, and stronger emotions than the Great Wall in the history of Chinese literature and art. Building the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing on this basis, we must use the Great Wall and its culture as a bond to create a set of literary and performing artworks with profound thinking, artistic excellence, and exquisite authorship. We shall plan and launch live-action Great Wall-themed performances to present the profound and powerful history of the Great Wall with modern audio-visual technology. In doing so, we shall link the Great Wall attractions in the six districts involved in the

Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. We shall dig deeper into the cultural resources available in the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, such as historical stories, folktales, legends, poems, and songs to enhance the cultural value of the Great Wall as a whole and promote the Great Wall culture to the world.

We shall carry out several meaningful cultural activities. We shall strive to build the Great Wall cultural forum with the themes of Great Wall protection, research on the Great Wall Cultural Belt, the Great Wall cultural dissemination, and the Great Wall creative cultural industry development to expand the cultural belt's exchange function. We shall try to hold national and international Great Wall culture exhibitions and exchange conferences and strengthen the cultural exchanges between the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and all parts of the country and the world, thus building



Laolongtou at the Shanhaiguan Pass (2017)

first-class bridges and bonds for communication with the world. We shall organise a series of events and activities based on the ecological resources, the ancient roads, temples and villages along the Great Wall in Beijing to expand the influence of the Great Wall culture.

We shall create high-quality tourist routes. To construct the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing, we must stick to the principle of integrating protection with utilisation and pay more attention to the belt's practicality and liveliness. We shall produce art products with Great Wall culture characteristics, create programmes and tourism brand names, and augment the production chain of derivative culture products. We shall bring the cultural relics to life and to use with the market mechanism. We must actively connect the spatial layout of Beijing's tourism development and the five groups of the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing. We must make

painstaking efforts to create high-quality tourist routes by integrating nature, history, culture, folkway, and scenery, with the help of the natural landscape, cultural remains, and existing infrastructure along the Great Wall. We shall carry out exquisite rural projects, upgrade and renovate quality rural hotels, and develop excellent folk courtyards to form a rural tourism pattern, which will be led by the Great Wall culture, driven by large projects, supported by small nodes, with the participation by folk households. We shall develop creative cultural tourist souvenirs featuring the Great Wall culture and establish a development, marketing, and sales system for characteristic tourism products to enhance the brand influence and market competitiveness of the Great Wall tourism in Beijing.

In short, the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park shows that the

protection of the Great Wall has been raised to the national strategic level. The 2021 Beijing Great Wall Cultural Festival Badaling Great Wall Summit Forum was convened on July 22. Representatives of 17 regions from nine provinces and cities along the Great Wall gathered at its foot to provide inputs and suggestions for the construction of the Great Wall Culture Park.¹ The latest news coming out of this meeting reveals that the Plan on the Construction and Conservation of the Great Wall Culture Park (Beijing Section) has been completed. According to the preliminary screening opinions of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Beijing has, based on its research, determined the content and key projects, and clarified the scope and area of the Great Wall management and protection area. It has also decided on five theme display areas, 20 culture and tourism integration areas, and 90 traditional utilisation areas.

It's working out plans to set up four core groups of displaying cultural essences: the Juyong Road Group, the Huanghua Road Group, the Gubeikou Road Group, and the Malan Road Group. Completion of planning is slated for the end of 2021.

A Chinese Story and a World Model

The Great Wall is the most representative Chinese symbol in the world context.

The construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is a Chinese story that should best be told in the context of the world.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Europeans already knew the Great Wall of China and gradually interpreted it as a symbol of Chinese civilisation. Various texts introducing the

Great Wall of China imparted a specific cultural meaning while describing it as an architectural miracle with both positive and negative views. Some believe that the Great Wall symbolizes ancient China's greatness, while others think it embodies conservatism. However, the countries worldwide widely recognise it as a Chinese symbol in the world context today. Those understandings require the urgent establishment of new media and platforms to bring the Great Wall culture to the world on a higher plane. In this regard, the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is of great significance.

The construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park is a grand narrative. Its interpretation requires broader international platforms, such as exploring and hosting international summits and forums on national culture parks and formulating relevant international standards. In particular, digital technology has opened up new opportunities for building the Great Wall National Culture Park and protecting the Great Wall cultural relics. It further enriches the presentation of cultural remains and helps the Great Wall culture reach the world on a broader platform. For example, we can turn traditional museums, exhibition halls, and visitor centres into vivid cultural experience venues to enhance the Great Wall's influence in the international and global context through digital interaction, immersive means and other technologies. On July 26, 2021, the Beijing Great Wall Cultural Festival Badaling Great Wall Summit Forum discussed a series of topics on the theme of "Protection, Inheritance and Development and Symbiosis – Great Wall Protection and Development in the Context of the National Culture Park." The topics included

1 Focusing on the Construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park, Experts Gathered at the Badaling Great Wall Summit Forum to Provide Their Inputs [EB/OL]. (2021-07-27)[2021-12-20]. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1706365043255654395&wfr=spider&for=pc>.

“building the Great Wall National Culture Park,” “protecting and developing the Great Wall cultural heritage under the background of ‘Culture+,’” “building the ‘Great Wall Cultural Economic Belt’ under the framework of regional coordinated development,” and “developing cultural tourism industry along the Great Wall.” The forum consists of three parts: theme forum, parallel forum, and fireside talks at night. The purpose was to carry forward the Great Wall spirit, disseminate the protection idea, and promote the concept of sharing regional experience in building the Great Wall National Culture Park. Additionally, it also aims to gather the forces of the government, enterprises, universities, and research institutions to push the Great Wall protection and its culture across the country to a new level.

Today, in the 21st century, it’s difficult for people to imagine what a world without cultural heritage would be like. It’s even harder to imagine what it would be like without building a national culture park like the Great Wall as China is moving toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. The construction of national culture parks of the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March should be a national project. Its purpose is to protect and promote the cultural heritage, a shared wealth of all humankind, and this protection is an essential responsibility for a country to fulfil. Simultaneously, it’s also the responsibility of a civilised power, and in extension, an organic part of the joint obligation of the international community.

Compared with national parks in the traditional sense, national culture parks have strengthened the element of culture and placed cultural attributes in a crucial position. Whether in terms of geographical scope or role positioning, it is no longer limited to either nature protection or tourism

development. Instead, it highlights the overall utilisation and inheritance of cultural resources as essential content to strengthen the Chinese culture’s leading and symbolic role. At the same time, we might as well think about the construction and continuous operation of the Beijing Great Wall National Culture Park from the perspective of the “cultural landscape” theory to achieve a brand name effect and a win-win result with the overall harmonious development of the region. People always notice and recognise those places that have become the centre of world civilisations and culture because of their pragmatic and influential cultural and civilised practice. Therefore, we need to explore the interaction between Man and Nature and the connection between protection and interpretation in the cultural landscape. We need to research the main characteristics and the formation mechanism of the dynamic evolution between the cultural core and external factors and conduct in-depth research on theoretical methods from three aspects: value characteristics, protection interpretation, and organic growth. The study will give us theoretical support. In particular, we must stand at the height of the two centenary goals and proceed from the mission of marching to the world’s centre stage and build a “high-quality capital city centred on the people and its culture.” Just as Lian Yuming, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and President of the International Institute for Urban Development, Beijing, points out, we must maximize the advantages of the capital’s development, building it into a world-class urban agglomeration, a window for advanced socialist culture, a centralised display area for excellent traditional Chinese culture, and a site for dissemination and exchange of national and international cultures in

coordination with the development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.¹ According to the Beijing Municipal Master Plan (2016–2035), it's necessary to ensure the realisation of Beijing's strategic goal of building a world-class urban agglomeration with Beijing, the capital, at its core by 2050. We must fully realize that the cultural centre is the strategic commanding height of building such a world-class urban agglomeration. More importantly, culture is precisely the unique advantage of the capital city, irreplaceable by other cities. To this end, it is necessary to speed up formulating a “negative list” for building the Great Wall National Culture Park and putting more emphasis on protection.² In building the Great Wall National Culture Park, we must prioritize the conservation of the Great Wall's historical and cultural heritage and insist on placing protection and inheritance first. We must assert prohibitive and restrictive regulations and clarify the do's and don'ts. We shall further enhance the cultural value of protecting and using the Great Wall in Beijing to demonstrate its representativeness. We must treat the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing as part of the effort to construct the Great Wall National Culture Park. We shall coordinate our endeavour to advocate Great Wall protection and cultural construction so that the world can sense and appreciate the unique charm of the Chinese culture, whose influence will reach the world. With all the efforts we make, we'll create a sustainable heritage of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

In terms of legal system construction, the construction of the Beijing Great Wall National

Culture Park requires the deconstruction and construction abrogating old and framing new laws and regulations, institutional mechanisms, and service capabilities. System construction is one of the critical tasks of the National Culture Park. It's also the basis for smoothly advancing the park's construction and ensuring its continuous operation. The Central Government and the Beijing Municipal Government have been highly valuing legal system construction. It's evident from the existing Central Government's Great Wall Protection Regulations and the Beijing Municipal Government's Beijing Great Wall Protection Management Measures, as well as other national and municipal protection management regulations and documents. Nevertheless, with the rapid advancement of the Great Wall National Culture Park, those regulations and related documents issued more than a decade ago are marred with flaws in terms of system integrity and interconnectivity. The framing of new laws and regulations for the Beijing Great Wall National Culture Park needs to be based on evaluating the existing laws and regulations related to the Great Wall's protection and utilisation. Those laws and regulations include the Beijing Great Wall Protection Management Measures and the Beijing Great Wall Protection Plan. We must effectively enforce the Beijing Municipal Great Wall Protection Regulations and detail and supplement relevant rules and regulations at the operational level. Those operations must go hand in hand with the current territorial and spatial planning and the goal of national culture park construction. In terms of institutional mechanisms, we must explore suitable construction models

1 Luo Xin and Xu Zhidi. Lian Yuming: Actively Promoting the Construction of the National Great Wall Culture Park [EB/OL]. (2021-02-24)[2021-12-20]. <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2021/02-24/9418090.shtml>.

2 Lian Yuming. Reevaluating the Epochal Values of the National Great Wall Culture Park of China CPPCC [Z]. 2020: 46–47.

by taking advantage of resource endowment, land ownership, and national conditions. In terms of service capabilities, the construction and protection of national culture parks are time-sensitive and demanding, requiring multiparty coordination, efficient operation, and orderly progress.

In recent years, to promote the adequate protection of cultural heritage by Society, implementing a series of measures, including the National Culture Park, has achieved remarkable results. In particular, the international community, organisations, and institutions have passed a series of important legal documents for cultural heritage protection. Today, the practice of world cultural heritage protection has also proved that the key to heritage protection is the legal system. Additionally, these cultural heritage protection charters, declarations, and recommendations have crystallised the essence of the practice and theory of world cultural heritage protection. Examples include the Athens Charter on restoring historical monuments, the Venice Charter on the conservation and restoration of international heritage, the Florence Charter on conserving historic gardens and landscapes, and the Washington Charter on preserving historic towns and urban areas. Since the beginning of the new century, government involvement in substantive conservation endeavours has increased based on previous efforts, including more effective practices such as the national parks. In particular, the system of natural reserves in the United States constituted by the national parks is considered the country's most valuable historical heritage. They are managed as public properties and protected and maintained for future generations to enjoy. The United States uses national parks to protect the country's natural, cultural, and

historical heritage. These windows allow the world to learn about the country's beauty, its natural and historical wealth, and its glory, joy, and woes. The National Park Service is responsible for carefully screening proposals for new parks to ensure that only the most outstanding resources can be included in the US national park system. In many countries worldwide, people are committed to protecting natural resources and historical sites and finding ways to combine resource protection with attracting tourists. China may have started its national park system relatively late, but it did it from a high starting point, and its practice is of more universal and acceptable value. From the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC in 2013 that first proposed establishing a national park system to the launch of ten pilot national parks in 2015, China gradually explored establishing the national parks system. In the 13th Five-Year Plan released in 2017, the concept of the national culture park was derived from national parks. In 2019, the plan for building the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March National Culture Parks was reviewed and approved. It decided to build the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March national culture park. In 2020, the Yellow River was added to the 14th five-year plan, eventually forming the layout of "four major" national culture parks.

Cultural heritage is the pride of national spiritual culture and the image of national civilisation. It embodies thousands of years of hard human work and infinite intelligence and has accumulated precious spiritual resources and material wealth of human civilisation and handed down from generation to generation. Like a spiritual power, it sustains humankind's confidence and ideal of building



The Dushikou section of the Great Wall (2017)

a beautiful home in the future.¹ On this basis, we have a deep understanding of the national culture parks that we will build. They will be the crystallisation of nature and culture transcending the times. They will be living

cultural heritages rooted in the earth. They will also be shining examples of the miraculous fusion of the essence of human culture and natural creation.

¹ Zhang Song. *Selection of International Charter and Domestic Laws and Regulations for the Protection of Urban Cultural Heritage* [M]. Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2007.



The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2017)



Part V

The Beauty of Winter Sports

The International Olympic Committee has emphasised, “In the Olympic Movement, valuing ‘universality’ should never mean demanding standardised modernisation or cultural homogenisation, much less Europeanisation or Westernisation. Proper Olympic education seeks to explore and to celebrate cultural diversity in the Olympic Movement.” The Olympic Games have never been merely a sporting event. It is a stage for the display, exchange, and integration of all ethnic groups’ cultures in the world. On February 4, 2022, the XXIV Olympic Winter Games will be held in Beijing and Zhangjiakou, “close to each other in terms of geographical locations, ancestral ties, and cultural backgrounds.” It’s geographically the transitional area from the North China Plain to the Mongolian Plateau, with undulating mountains, numerous tunnels, and ancient roads. It is an area where the resources of the Great Wall of China are concentrated, representative, and well-preserved. Some of the venues for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 are built along the Great Wall. When the Great Wall that has witnessed the trials and tribulations of life meets the modern Olympic Games, it will foster a cultural feast that spans time and space. The Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will engrave a unique cultural symbol and charm on the history book of the Olympic Movement.

The Dream of the City of the Olympic Summer and Winter Games

Beijing is currently the only “Dual Olympic City” globally hosting both the Olympic summer and winter games. Since China participated in the Olympic Winter Games for the first time in 1980, China has started a magical relationship with sports on ice and snow. The Beijing 2008 Games and the Beijing 2022 Games are set to deepen China’s connection with the Olympic Games. Simultaneously, it will also raise the curtain on displaying Beijing, an ancient cultural capital and an international metropolis, on the world stage. “The centre and starting point of spreading Olympic culture is Beijing, with the Olympic Manifesto as the vehicle.”¹ Beijing, in the new era, will witness China’s centennial Olympic Dream – a sports power’s dream coming true through hardships with glory.

China’s Affinity with the Olympic Movement

In 1908, when Tianjin Youth introduced the grand opportunity of the World Olympic Games to the Chinese people, it raised the famous “Three Questions about the Olympic Games” in one breath: When can China send athletes to participate in the Olympic Games? When will China get its first gold medal in the Olympic Games? When can China host the Olympic Games? Since then, generations of Chinese have embarked on a journey of dreaming about the Olympic Games. In 1896, the Qing government received an invitation from the International Olympic Committee and didn’t know what it was. In 1932, the famous male sprinter Liu Changchun participated in the Olympic Games Los Angeles 1932 (the Games of the X Olympiad) for the first time on behalf

¹ Fang Li. Sharing the Beauty of the Olympics with the World – a Story of the Innovated Spread of the Olympic Ideas by the Magazine Civilisation [J]. *Capital Market*, 2014 (12): 1–4.

of China. Not until 1984 did China win gold medals, a breakthrough in the history of the Olympic Games. China has come a long way from the restoration of the IOC qualification to the right to host the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, from the Olympic Summer Games to the Olympic Winter Games. The journey represented the changes in the world in the past century and witnessed the growth of the great Chinese sports industry. It also testifies to China's remarkable transformation from development to revitalisation.

"What is the Olympic Movement?" The North China Daily News, an English-language newspaper in Shanghai, reputed as the most influential foreign newspaper of the time, published an article titled "Facts in China" on October 17, 1896. There is a sentence in the article: "China is the sick man of East Asia." Although it referred to the weak reform of the Qing government, not the Chinese people's physique, the statement conveyed something that struck a heavy blow at Chinese self-esteem. In the same year, the first modern era Olympic Games, planned by Pierre Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Movement, convened in Athens and was a success. The number of participants in the Olympic Games might be small, but its impact was huge. Before the start of the Games, its organisers had sent invitations to various countries worldwide, including the Qing government, which had just been defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895. However, from top to bottom, the Qing government didn't know what the "Olympic Games" was, so it only sent observers to the event. In 1932, the Government of the Republic of China officially sent Liu Changchun to participate in the Olympic Games Los Angeles 1932 (the Games of the X Olympiad), the US. Liu Changchun became China's first athlete to participate in the Olympic Games. He took a cruise that left Shanghai for Los Angeles in the

United States to embark on the maiden voyage of the Chinese participation in the Olympic Games. He arrived in Los Angeles after a three week "bumpy" journey by sea, which greatly affected his physical strength. He was ranked fifth and sixth in the group in the 100m and 200m preliminaries. He failed to roar into the finals but went down to the Chinese history of the Olympic Games as the first Chinese athlete to participate. He knocked the door of the Olympic Games open for the Chinese people, and took the first step on behalf of the Chinese Nation in the world history of the Olympic Games. His presence also expressed to the world the strong sentiment of the Chinese Nation, unwilling to be left behind and humiliated – he desire to strive unrelentingly to catch up with the world.

Dubbed a "match-maker" between China and the Olympic Games, Juan Antonio Samaranch is a legend in the international Olympic Movement. He has served as the Chairman of the International Olympic Committee for 21 years. During his tenure, he not only successfully promoted the commercialisation of the Olympic Games but also freed the IOC from financial crisis, making the Olympic Games the most influential sports event. After the founding of the PRC, some conservative forces within the International Olympic Committee were hostile to New China and pursued the "Two Chinas" policy. Although the United Nations had restored China to its legal seat in 1971, the legal seat in the International Olympic Committee was yet to be returned to it. On April 21, 1978, Samaranch visited China for the first time as the Ambassador of Spain to Moscow and the Special Envoy of the First Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee. A year and a half later, in April 1979, at the 8th plenary meeting of the International Olympic Committee, Samaranch shared what he saw



The Dajingmen Gate (2017)

and heard in China, asking, “If China, which accounts for 23% of the world’s population, is excluded from the Olympic Games, is it still the Olympic Games in its true sense?” On October 25, 1979, the Executive Committee of the International Olympic Committee passed the Nagoya Resolution known as the “Olympic Model” in history through voting by correspondence. It decided that the PRC’s Olympic Committee be named “Chinese Olympic Committee,” using the PRC’s national flag and anthem, and that the Olympic Committee based in Taipei stop using its current song, flag, and emblem. On November 26, 1979, the International Olympic Committee announced in Lausanne that it approved the resolution of the Executive Committee. After years of struggle, the issue of China’s legal rights in the International Olympic Committee was finally resolved. Since then, the Chinese sports community has begun to actively support the popularisation and promotion of the Olympic Games actively according to the Olympic Movement’s principle of universality so that the Chinese, who account for one-fifth

of the world’s population, can share the honour and joy of hosting the Olympic Games. In 1982, Sa Weng (“Grandpa Sa,” Samaranch’s respectful Chinese nickname), who had become the president of the International Olympic Committee, visited China for the second time, met President Deng Xiaoping, and discussed the topic of China hosting the Olympic Games in the future. Just the previous year, He Zhenliang had been elected to the International Olympic Committee with the help of Samaranch. His membership enabled China to occupy a place in the international sports organisation and allowed Sa Weng to get to know China more closely. In 1989, Samaranch visited China again and contacted high-level Chinese officials. They discussed the possibility of having China hold events of the Olympic Games. It can safely be asserted that that moment was the starting point of Beijing’s Olympic Dream. Samaranch stated at the time, “I helped bring China back to the international Olympic family and saw with my own eyes it hosting a great Olympic Games. And more importantly, as I witness that the Olympic Games has really helped China move



The Huanghuacheng section of the Great Wall (2019)

toward the world with the promise to play an essential role in the future, I feel that China-related affairs are the greatest achievement in my Olympic career.”¹ On July 13, 2001, Samaranch announced with a deep voice that Beijing was the host city of the 2008 Olympic Games! “Before the result was revealed, I presumed that Beijing should be the winner. I think the Chinese people are very happy, and we are happy because of it. That evening was important to the International Olympic Committee, to the (Chinese) government, and to myself.”²

China won its first gold medal, a breakthrough in its history of the Olympic Games, in 1984 at the XXIII Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, the US. China sent a sports delegation composed of 353 athletes. On the

first day of the Los Angeles Olympic Games, Chinese shooter Xu Haifeng outscored world famous Sweden’s Ragnar Skanaker and won the gold medal with 566 points in the men’s 50m free pistol event, thus making history in China’s Olympic record. It was not long after China struggled out of the devastating “Cultural Revolution” and embarked on the reform and opening-up. The first Olympic gold medal that Xu Haifeng had won came as a tremendous lift of the Chinese morale, making them more confident in the Chinese Nation and heralding its stride toward the world arena of sports competition. At the time this book is being written, the Chinese athletes have won 365 gold medals, 194 silver medals, 172 bronze medals, totalling 631 medals in the Olympic Summer Games. In the Olympic Winter Games, they

1 Bid Farewell to Samaranch [N]. *Liaoshen Evening News*, 2010-04-22(A16).

2 Ibid.

have won 13 gold medals, 28 silver medals, and 21 bronze medals, 62 in all.

The 11th Asian Games (XI Asiad) held in 1990 allowed Beijing to warm up for its “Olympic Journey.” The 1990 Asian Games was the first comprehensive international sports event hosted by China. “Asian Mighty Winds,” the event’s theme song, became the strongest voice of the era and the most beautiful memory. To build the venues for the Asian Games, the National Olympic Sports Centre project began on a piece of land measuring several hundred acres along the central axis of north Beijing. It was another large-scale construction in Beijing after the “Ten Great Buildings” of the 1950s. The Asian Games was a historical juncture for China to demonstrate its national culture, ethos, and image of a significant power after its reform and opening-up. It was a critical time for Beijing to move toward internationalisation. The success in holding the 1990 Asian Games gave Beijing confidence and experience. Simultaneously, it also allowed it to improve its sports facilities and municipal infrastructure, thus laying the foundation for the successful bid and hosting of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. China, unfortunately, lost its first Olympic bid in 1993. But on the evening of July 13, 2001, when the good news that Beijing was the winner came, the whole country was alive with jubilation. Thousands of people in Beijing took to the streets. They turned the night into one of carnival revelries, singing and dancing while waving national flags to express their joy and congratulations on the successful bid on behalf of the Chinese people at large. After the successful bid for the Olympic Games, Beijing entered a period of accelerated development with the Olympic Games as the theme. At the end of 2003, the main venue of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 broke ground in Wali Township. The main stadium gradually revealed its “porous” appearance, just like a

bird’s nest. The membrane structure theory that had floated for over a century was realised in the Beijing National Aquatics Centre, popularly known as “Water Cube.” The Chinese used their wisdom to make innovative contributions to the world, adding new highlights to the 100-plus-year Olympic Movement.

Beijing’s Olympic Memory

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games were an unprecedented feast for the world and a century-old dream of China as a country and nation. “It’s a truly exceptional Olympic Games!” commented the president of the International Olympic Committee in his speech at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. China achieved the objectives of bidding and preparing for and holding “characteristic and high-level” Olympic events. It fulfilled the IOC’s requirement to satisfy the international community, the participant athletes, and the Chinese people and fully honoured its promise to the world.

The Organising Committee for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games (BOCOG) unveiled the theme slogan “One World, One Dream” to the world at the Beijing Workers’ Gymnasium on June 26, 2005. The slogan embodies the essence and universal values of the Olympic spirit: unity, friendship, progress, harmony, participation, and dreams. At the same time, the slogan also reflects the core concept of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. It expresses the lofty ideal of the people in China and the world to share a beautiful home, enjoy the fruits of civilisation, and create the future with joined hands. It expresses the firm belief that a great nation with 5,000 years of civilised history striding toward modernisation is committed to peaceful development, social harmony, and people’s happiness. It voices the Chinese people’s heartfelt wishes to contribute to build a peaceful and better world.

During the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, Beijing put forward the concept of “Green Olympic Games, High-tech Olympic Games, and People’s Olympic Games.” While inheriting the Olympic spirit, it also enriched and developed the Olympic spirit. It was also a significant effort to build a model of sustainably developing Chinese cities. In 2002, Beijing issued the Beijing Olympic Action Plan, which first proposed building an ecological city. In the same year, Beijing fully implemented the “Green Olympic Games – 2008” environment Construction Action Plan. It planted 58 million trees covering 40,000 hectares of land in 2002 alone and had achieved a greening rate of 51.6% in the city proper and 70.49 in the mountainous areas by the end of 2007. The city created 12,600 hectares of green space in its green isolation areas and built three green ecological barriers. As a result, downtown Beijing’s green coverage reached 43%, and nature reserves in the city’s territory reached 8.18% of its total land area.¹ Thus, Beijing fulfilled and even exceeded the greening and beautifying targets it had promised during its Olympic bid. To make the Olympic Games event a high-tech one, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Beijing Municipal Government jointly implemented the Olympic Games Technology (2008) Action Plan. Beijing used many advanced technologies in building, operating, and managing the Olympic venues, making the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 a window and stage to showcase China’s high-tech and innovative strength. The concept of “People’s Olympic Games” is at the core of the Games, highlighting the humanistic characteristics of the Olympic

spirit and the charm and value of Chinese history and culture. In February 2005, the Beijing Municipal Committee of the CPC, the Municipal Government, the Capital Civilisation Commission, and BOCOG formulated the Implementation Opinions on the People’s Olympic Games Action Plan based on the People’s Olympic Games Action Plan devised in 2002. Beijing proposed four significant projects for realising the People’s Olympic Games: the citizen quality improvement project, the cultural construction promotion project, the urban landscape construction project, and the social mobilisation volunteer training project. Putting the People’s Olympic Games concept into practice extended Beijing’s influence globally and improved its overall competitiveness.²

We have to mention Chaoyang District when we speak of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. Home to the main venues of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, Chaoyang, an internationalised district of Beijing, has been deeply etched in the Olympic memories. Chaoyang District lies in the northeastern part of Beijing. On May 3, 1958, the State Council renamed the eastern suburb Chaoyang District. It’s the largest and most populous district in Beijing and used to be an essential producer of rice and vegetable for the capital’s residents. After the 1950s, with Beijing’s urban planning adjustment, five major industrial areas of the textile, electronics, chemical, machinery manufacturing, and automobiles settled in Chaoyang District, making it a solid industrial base in Beijing. The electronics and textile industries, in particular, have turned Beijing into an essential production base for the electronics

1 By 2007, the Greening Rate in Beijing Had Reached 51.6%, and the Greening Rate in the Mountainous Areas Had Reached 70.49% [EB/OL]. (2008-07-10)[2021-12-20]. <http://www.news.cctv.com/china/20080710/105653.shtml>.

2 Beijing Olympic Park Administration Committee. *The Olympic Model* [M]. Beijing: China Times and Economic Publishing House, 2009.

industry and one of the five major cotton textile industrial bases. At the same time, with the development of China's diplomacy, the first Embassy Area was built in Qijiayuan outside Jianguomen (a gate in the city wall) in 1955. The second followed near Sanlitun, Dongzhimen, in the 1960s, and the third embassy area was built in the vicinity of Liangma River around 1990. Chaoyang District hosts the embassies of all the countries enjoying a foreign relationship with China except Russia. Chaoyang District has thus become China's "second border." Situated at an intersection where Chang'an Street, the Jianguomen, the China World Trade Centre, and the Yansha Embassy Area meet, the Beijing Business Centre is the centralised showcase of Beijing's modern and internationalised look, a significant window introducing Chaoyang District to the world. A district characterised by modernity and internationalisation enabled Chaoyang District to be the principal venue for the Asian Games and the Olympic Games. Preparing for and hosting the two events have sped up the Chaoyang's economic and social development. During the Games, Chaoyang District became home to 13 Olympic venues for competitive events, 12 Olympic venues for non-competitive activities, 5 independent training facilities, 2 Olympic open events, 42 contracted hotels, 29 specified routes, and 3 designated hospitals. It undertook 20% of the training venues' renovation, 42% of the new venues' construction, 56% of the road building, and 100% of the bridge erection. The district also undertook the task of the environment cleanup.¹ To serve the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, Chaoyang District established the "three-front-lines" command system and a management structure that specifies the respective responsibilities of specialised departments and sub-district offices. Thus,

it set up a perfect, open, flexible, effective, and seamless connection system and formed the most extensive social mobilisation and public participation mechanisms, thus making a positive contribution to the preparation and operation of the Games. As a result, the Olympic Games and its glory have left an indelible mark in the history of Chaoyang District.

During the seven years of preparation, Beijing invested ten billion yuan (about 156.67 million dollars) in the most significant sports event in Chinese history that lasted 16 days. The Games has won world applause. From returning to the embrace of the Olympic family in the early stage of China's reform and opening-up to bidding for the Olympic Games and successfully hosting the 2008 event, Beijing has become a contributor to the Olympic Movement. The city of Beijing has developed rapidly in the accompaniment of the triumphant song of the Olympic Games, firmly establishing its image as the capital of China as a world power. After the conclusion of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, the Beijing Olympic Park quickly became a new economic circle, breaking the previous spell of "deserting the Olympic venues after the end of the games." It has promoted Beijing's economic development and provided the "Beijing Experience" for the cities to host future Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games Beijing 2008 witnessed the glorious development of contemporary China and brought an ancient nation out to the world, leaving clear footsteps behind. The Games helped China convey its traditional culture and modern spirit to the world, demonstrating its image of openness, transparency, and commitment. In a sense, the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 proved a new

¹ Ibid.

landmark in the 30-year history of China's reform and opening-up. It was also China's new starting point to integrate itself with the international community.

From the Olympic Summer Games to the Olympic Winter Games

China has gone through a hundred years from the "Three Questions about the Olympic Games" to "an unparalleled 2008 Beijing Olympic Games." The Chinese people's Olympic Dream has finally come true. On July 31, 2015, the International Olympic Committee officially decided that Beijing host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, making it the first "Dual Olympic City" in the world, a host of both the Summer and Olympic Winter Games. China has come a long way since its return to the Olympic family in 1979. "The Dual Olympic City" has become Beijing's unique brand name. It has also witnessed the city's glory and paved its way toward national rejuvenation in the new era.

The Olympic Winter Games is the largest comprehensive winter sports event in the world. There have been 23 events between the first Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France, held in 1924, to the the PyeongChang 2018 Games, ROK. In nearly 130 years of Olympic Games, only France, the United States, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada have hosted both the Olympic Summer and Winter Games throughout the Olympic history. Beijing will become the first city to host the three international sporting events: the Olympic Summer Games, the Olympic Winter Games, and the Asian Games. It's also the second capital city to host the Olympic Winter Games 70 years after Oslo hosted the Games in 1952. With its sports events divided into two categories, those on the ice and those on the snow, the Olympic Winter Games imposed

rigorous climate and terrain conditions on candidate cities. For example, the core meteorological indicators include the average temperature below 0°C in February, and 30 centimetres or more snowfall in February. Many of the venues need to be located in mountains. Besides the natural environment, the Olympic Winter Games also requires that a hosting city and its country be economically robust, infrastructurally developed, and conveniently located. The Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will occur in three venues: Beijing, Yanqing District of Beijing, and Zhangjiakou City, Hebei Province. It will be another testimony to the overall strength of Beijing and China, an ancient civilisation.

Beijing zone is home to all the six ice-event venues of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and hosts competitions in four sports (curling, ice hockey, skating, and skiing) and 37 events. The Beijing National Aquatics Centre, also known as the Water Cube, was originally the main swimming venue for the 2008 Games. The transformation from a "Water Cube" to an "Ice Cube" has added the functions for ice events while keeping its original water sports functions. It also makes it possible to reuse conversion materials, which effectively reduces the cost of future rehabilitations. The Capital Indoor Stadium, the largest, most versatile, and widely applicable gymnasium in Beijing, was completed in 1968. It boasts China's first domestically designed and constructed artificial indoor rink, which has witnessed many important events in Chinese sports. As the ice event venue for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the stadium will host short-track speed skating and figure skating competitions. The Wukesong Sports Centre is nicknamed Bing Linghua ("Ice Pattern") because of its unique colourful exterior curtain wall system capable of presenting the visual



The Huanghuacheng Lakeside Great Wall (2016)

effect of snow falling from the sky at night. It will be used as the ice hockey venue for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. With the blessing of 5G and free-viewpoint-video technologies, the stadium boasts the functions of “smart” real time temperature measurement, cloud communication, and remote interviews, which will fully meet the needs of the sports events and the prevention and control of the pandemic. The Beijing National Indoor Stadium’s design was inspired by the Chinese hand-held folding fan, which seamlessly connects the original roof structure. The rink in the stadium meets the need for figure skating and short track speed skating and can also be used both for summer and winter sports events. The Big Air Shougang consists of three parts: the track, the referee tower, and the spectators’ stand to be used for freestyle skiing big air and snowboard big air during the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. The Big Air Shougang is the first venue in the history of the Olympic Winter Games integrated with industrial heritage. The design was inspired by the curved cross-section of a launch ramp that corresponds to the dancing posture of feitian, a Chinese term for Apsara, a flying deva of Buddhist mythology. Incidentally, the images of the Chinese feitian were discovered in the murals of the Dunhuang Grottoes. From the side view, it also looks like a vivid “crystal shoe” of Cinderella. The National Speed Skating Oval is located on the south side of the Olympic Forest Park Tennis Centre. It’s the only newly-built ice competition venue in this event. With “ice” and “speed” as the design concept and its façade decorated by 22 sheets of crystal-clear, beautiful, ribbon-like curved glass, this venue is nicknamed “Ice Ribbon.” The ice rink covers the entire floor, measuring 14,000 square metres, making it the largest rink in Asia.

The Yanqing zone is located in the northwest of Beijing, 74 kilometres away from the capital’s downtown. It will be home to

two competition venues for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, i.e., the National Alpine Skiing Centre and the National Sliding Centre. These venues will be used for three sports (alpine skiing, bobsleigh, luge) and 21 events. The Yanqing zone is the most difficult to construct among the three competition zones of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Built on the Haituo Mountain’s natural shapes, the National Alpine Skiing Centre has seven alpine skiing trails, with a total length of 21 kilometres, with approximately 900 metres drop, and over 3,000 metres of slope length. Events such as downhill, slalom, giant slalom, super-G, and combined. The luge and bobsleigh are the fastest of the Winter Olympic events, with speed exceeding 130 km/h. It’s highly professional and ornamental. The National Sliding Centre will be the venue for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games’ bobsleigh, and skeleton events dubbed as the “Formula One on the Ice.” The National Sliding Centre’s track is 1.9 kilometres long with a vertical drop of 127 metres. With 16 bends, the track is exceptionally complex.

The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will be organising 109 events. Among them, 51 events will take place in the ten venues in the Zhangjiakou zone, accounting for about 47% of all the events. Four of the ten venues are the Genting Snow Park, the National Ski Jumping Centre, the National Cross-Country Skiing Centre, and the National Biathlon Centre. As the main venue for freestyle skiing and snowboarding in the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the Genting Snow Park has six tracks, courses, and facilities for halfpipe, slopestyle, parallel giant slalom, ski cross, aerials, and moguls events. The National Ski Jumping Centre is China’s first ski jumping venue that meets international standards. In the venue clusters of the Zhangjiakou Zone, this centre required the largest amount of work and involved the most technical difficulties in

its construction. It's nicknamed "Snow Ruyi" because its S-shaped section resembles the curved ruyi, a traditional Chinese decorative object serving as either a ceremonial sceptre in Chinese Buddhism or a talisman symbolising power and good fortune in Chinese folklore. The National Cross-Country Skiing Centre is located in the valley southeast of Taizicheng, Chongli District, Zhangjiakou City. Its track is built on the mountain according to its shape. The centre boasts two tracks with a total length of 9.7 kilometres: the one in the east valley is to be used for the competition, whereas the one in the south is for training. After the Olympic Winter Games, the centre will be converted to a "mountain park" and an "outdoor ice entertainment centre" to bring its cultural and recreational role into full play. Located in the valley on the northeast side of the Taizicheng area, Chongli District, Zhangjiakou City, Hebei Province, the National Biathlon Centre will comprise a shooting range, tracks, a start and finish area, and a technical building. The National Biathlon Centre will undertake the biathlon and para biathlons.

The dream on ice and snow of the 2022 Olympic Winter Games coincides with the Chinese Dream. The year 2022 is when China has just realised its first centenary goal of rejuvenating the Chinese Nation: building a moderately prosperous Society in all respects. Preparing for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games allows China to become a sports power gradually. The 19th National Congress of the CPC that convened in 2017 stated, "We will carry out extensive Fitness-for-All programmes, speed up efforts to build China into a country strong in sports." In September 2019, the State Council issued the Outline for Building a Leading Sports Nation, which systematically planned to build China into a world sports power. The 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) for National Economic and Social Development and

the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035 set the goal of building China into a strong sports nation by 2035. All of them make it clear that building a leading sports nation has become an essential part of the overall development of China and its endeavour to realize the two centenary goals. The second centenary goal looks to 2049 when China will have become a "strong, democratic, civilised, harmonious, and modern socialist country." It includes improving the Chinese people's health. The Chinese Dream is the long-cherished wish of generations of the Chinese people in modern times. It embodies the overall interests of the Chinese Nation and expresses the shared vision of every Chinese. Continuously realising the people's aspiration for a better life is the top priority in realising the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. The 19th National Congress of the CPC specified the objectives: "We should make steady progress in ensuring people's access to childcare, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing, and social assistance." The Beijing Municipal Government further proposed continuously improving the "convenience, liveability, diversity, fairness, and safety" of its residents in their daily lives. Both the Central Government's and Beijing Municipal Government's objectives are concrete actions focusing on solving the problems faced by the people in their survival and development – concrete actions aimed at improving people's living standards.

The Chinese Dream is one of achieving more balanced and higher-quality development. China is a large country, and to develop it needs a great strategy. Its purpose is to balance uneven regional development, narrow regional development gaps, and improve the coordinated and balanced development. The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region's coordinated development strategy is an effective plan of action for China's regional coordinated



The Zhaiziqing section of the Great Wall (2017)

development. For Beijing and Zhangjiakou to co-host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games is the result of the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region. It's also a vigorous experience, a powerful booster, and a finishing touch of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region's coordinated development plan. In February 2019, when General Secretary Xi Jinping inspected the preparatory work on the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, he pointed out that hosting the Olympic Winter Games was an important starting point for promoting the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region. It must be planned and implemented as a whole so that Beijing and Hebei can progress together. Since they started the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games, Beijing and Zhangjiakou integrated their preparations since the very beginning. Their objectives are to positively impact the environment, achieve new regional development, and better people's lives. The high-speed railway allows commuters to travel between Beijing and Zhangjiakou within one hour. Zhangjiakou offers clean power to all the

Games venues for the first time in Olympic Games' history. With Zhangjiakou's wind energy lighting up Beijing's venues, both places will see their sky bluer, mountains greener, and water clearer. From low-carbon venues to ecological restoration, from environmental protection to serving the people's livelihood, Beijing and Hebei collaborate to plan their development with the same blueprint. They are working in concert to achieve the required angular velocity of coordinated action and make the Olympic Winter Games in beautiful China a tremendous success.

The Organising Committee of the Beijing 2022 Games launched a series of short videos titled *Dual Olympic City, One Day in Beijing* on the eve of the 100-day countdown to promote Beijing, the host of the Olympic Winter Games. As it says, Beijing is ready to welcome athletes from all over the world to share the event. It will show the world its rich cultural heritage, harmonious blend of nature, city, and humanities, and charm of modernity, openness, and fashion.

Expectations at the Foot of the Great Wall

The XXIV Olympic Winter Games will take place in Beijing and Zhangjiakou. The former will organise the ice events, whereas the latter, along with Yanqing, is responsible for the snow events. Located in the northwest of Beijing, Yanqing is home to the Badaling section of the Great Wall, the first window of the magnificent structure to the world. Chongli District, Zhangjiakou, where most of the venues for the snow events are concentrated, the lines of the Great Wall of seven dynasties criss-cross or run parallel with one another in picturesque apparent disorder. The infusion of the Great Wall element makes the 2022 Olympic Winter Games stand out exceptionally, making it a true “Olympic Winter Games at the Foot of the Great Wall.”

The Olympic Winter Games Starting on Beijing Time

The end of the PyeongChang 2018 Games on February 25, 2018, means that the Olympic

Winter Games officially entered “Beijing Time.” It began officially when Thomas Bach, president of the IOC, handed the Olympic flag to Chen Jining, Mayor of Beijing and Executive President of Beijing 2022. On February 28, the first activity after the Olympic flag arrived in Beijing from the once finished PyeongChang 2018 Games occurred at the foot of the Badaling section of the Great Wall in Yanqing District. Han Zhirong, secretary-general of Beijing 2022, handed over the Olympic flag to the representatives of the young people in Yanqing. Displaying the flag together, they invited friends from all over the world to gather at the foot of the Great Wall to eat *jiaozi* (dumplings), watch the Olympic Winter Games, and celebrate the New Year in 2022.

The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 entered a 1,000-day countdown on September 4, 2019, marking a new stage in its preparation. The day saw the countdown device lit up. The countdown device is a large screen fixed to the 4th to 7th floors of the Ling Long (Delicate)

Tower on its south side. The screen displays the countdown images, which, from top to bottom, consists of the emblem of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, the countdown words, and the countdown clock numbers. The pods of the Linglong Tower resemble multiple hourglasses, in line with the countdown concept. The tower where the countdown device is set echoes with the Olympic Winter Games venues such as the “Bird’s Nest” and the “Water Cube” in a fair distance, forming a distinct Olympic Winter Games-themed landscape. Beijing released the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 Volunteer Service Action Plan during the preparatory activities. Beijing 2022 has set up five volunteer services, including pre-event volunteer service, test-period volunteer service, competition-period volunteer service, urban volunteer service, and heritage-transformation volunteer service. The committee calls on worldwide volunteers to participate in the volunteer services for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 through those service projects.

By February 4, 2021, exactly a year before the 2022 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games was convened, all competition venues for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 had been completed and ready for operation. Simultaneously the first batch of staff had been in place. All the preparatory work had entered the final stage, with volunteers exceeding one million. On that day, the exterior design of the torch for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 was released. Cai Qi, Secretary of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee and President of Beijing 2022, said that the Chinese Government had always taken the preparatory work for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 as a national endeavour. At present, the overall plan went smoothly,

and the preparations had been moving forward steadily and orderly as planned. “The COVID-19 pandemic may have a huge impact on people’s work and life globally and the Olympic Movement. But it cannot stop us from holding the game as scheduled.” He continued, “We will work closely with the IOC, the WHO, and other parties to jointly study and formulate pandemic prevention and control policies and action plans regarding the Olympic Winter Games, as required by the demand for an ‘economic, safe, and exciting competition.’ We will strictly implement the prevention and control measures to ensure the competition events proceed smoothly and safely as scheduled.”

The IOC’s and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC)’s requirement and practice are organising a series of test events before the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games begin. According to the original plan, the venues of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will be completed at the end of 2020, and the international test events will be held from December 2020 to the first quarter of 2021. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent travel restrictions in mind, Beijing 2022 has kept intense communication with the IOC, the IPC, and the International Winter Sports Federation (IWSF). As a result, they have adjusted and optimised the plans for the test events timely. In the first half of 2021, they carried out the “Experience Beijing” snow and ice test events per the principle of “carrying out the test events that are necessary and feasible,” with some domestic athletes and technical officials invited to assist in the test activities. From October 5 to December 31, 2021, the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 entered the last phase, with 100 days left. In a series of test events held in full swing, all the people involved are getting themselves warmed up before the moment of



The Huanghuacheng Lakeside Great Wall (2018)

truth. International test events for the Olympic Winter Games occurred at eight venues in the Beijing, Yanqing, and Zhangjiakou zones, involving 15 test activities. They included ten international competitions, three international test weeks, and two domestic test events. These test events are the last comprehensive actual competition tests before the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 comes to be. It's of great significance for accumulating experience in pandemic prevention and control during competitions and making it possible for the actual competitions to begin safely and smoothly on schedule. Compared with the test activities in the first half of the year, many test events were part of individual International Sports Federation organisations' winter schedules and competition events. Some of the Olympic Winter Games qualifying and round-robin tournaments used time-keeping and scoring systems with more detailed requirements and higher standards. Over 2,000 athletes from Japan, the ROK, and countries and regions of North America

and Europe participated in the test events. Doing an excellent job in pandemic prevention and control was the top priority of this test event programme. To this end, the prevention and control work was done according to the standards required for the actual Olympic Winter Games. Athletes and staff, objects they touch, and the environs in their activity sphere were subject to the same prevention and control measures with ultimate details and adequate medical workers and supplies. Testing and disinfecting the competition areas was intensified, and more attention was paid to various prevention and control measures. Each competition zone's organising committees and venue teams will refine functional zoning, pandemic prevention zoning, and workflow. They are doing so as per the requirements of "one plan for one event" and "one plan for one venue" to strengthen closed-loop management and build a barrier against "imported cases." These efforts will ensure that the pandemic prevention work for the Olympic Winter Games competition venues and the urban

areas are seamlessly done at the same time to ensure their safety. Through the international test events, Beijing 2022 further explored the rules of pandemic prevention and control and evaluated the effects of their measures. In line with the pandemic situation at home and abroad, the committee will keep closing loopholes and optimising the COVID-19 prevention and control plans for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. They will make every effort to ensure the safety of the competition events and the health of the participants of the Olympic Winter Games at home and abroad.

The Great Wall's Rendezvous with the Olympic Winter Games

Situated in the northwest of Beijing, Yanqing connects the desert in the north and Juyongguan in the south. Its strategic location makes it the most significant transport artery leading to the northwest of China from Beijing. Therefore, It has been a battleground for military strategists since ancient times, and it is also a place where many ethnic groups live and integrate. The site of the Battle of Banquan fought by Huangdi and Yandi, the only Shanrong Cultural Exhibition Hall in China, the Guyaju Caves ancient cliff dwellings shrouded with the “mystery of ages,” and the Great Wall sections built in the past dynasties—all bear testimony to the integration of the various ethnic groups settling in Yanqing. Officially opened to the public on June 1, 1990, the Shanrong Cultural Exhibition Hall is China's first museum named after the minority ethnic culture of ancient times. It exhibits the remains of the Shanrong culture

from the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods in Beijing. Judging from their craftsmanship and shapes, the pottery ware, the bronzeware, and other cultural relics unearthed here clearly show the indigenous characteristics of the Shanrong culture and the Central Plains culture, such as the Yan State. They allow people to experience at first hand the contact, collision, and integration of the two cultures. The mountains in Yanqing are part of the Jundu Mountains of the Yanshan range, and over 80 peaks in the territory are a kilometre high. The summit of the Haituo Mountain soars 2,241 metres above sea level, the second highest peak in Beijing. The venues for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in the Yanqing zone are located at the southern foot of Small Haituo, south of the Jundu Mountain in the Yanshan range. Yanqing boasts beautiful scenery, lofty mountains, dense forests, and a complex terrain. Its geographical features conform to the ancient strategists' basic principle of building the Great Wall, namely, “adjusting measures to local conditions, creating passes where the places are dangerously inaccessible, and acquiring building materials where they are locally available.” The unique geographical location and topographical conditions make the Yanqing section of the Great Wall the most classic of the Great Wall in Beijing in general.¹

The Yanqing section of the Great Wall of China has the following five characteristics: (1) First, the existing wall is the longest of the Great Wall in Beijing. The remaining Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty in Beijing is 526 kilometres long, of which 179.1 kilometres traverse Yanqing District, accounting for 34% of the total length of the Great Wall

1 The Education, Cultural, Healthcare, and Sports Committee of the Beijing CPPCC and International Institute for Urban Development. *The “Comprehensive Volume” of The Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2018.

in Beijing. (2) The Yanqing section of the Great Wall is rich in forms and complete in defence facilities. It consists of sections of the wall made of bricks, compacted earth, and stone masonry. It's a perfect, in-depth defence system comprising the inner line of the Great Wall, the section at the present-day Xuanfu east and south roads, bastions, a series of beacon towers, and stockades and slopes. (3) The Yanqing section of the Great Wall is of great strategic importance. Originally, there were nine and then two other towns of strategic significance in the Ming Dynasty along the entire length of the Great Wall. Yanqing is located at the junction where three of the eleven towns meet, namely Jizhouzhen, Changpingzhen, and Xuanfuzhen. Fortified at various levels, the Yanqing section of the Great Wall was a crucial military barrier for the defence of the capital and the Ming Tombs. The section of the Great Wall in Yanqing was almost entirely built on the dangerously inaccessible places on the Jundu Mountains by "slicing off" the mountain tops or by building walled cities. The Great Wall climbs up to seize the commanding heights and swoops down to control the gorge openings. The Great Wall may occasionally extend to level ground only to connect the Great Wall's defence line and correspond to the bastions on them to perfect the Great Wall's defence pattern. Among the defence facilities, the Jiuyanlou scenic spot sits on the highest peak of Huoyan Mountain, nine kilometres southeast of Sihai Town. The highest and most sizable battlement sits on the section of the Great Wall, straddling the peak. (4) The Yanqing section of the Great Wall is full of cultural connotations. The Great Wall section traverses over 130 administrative villages in nine townships. Of the 376 administrative villages in the entire territory of Yanqing, 116

of them have *ying* (barracks), *tun* (garrison unit), and *bao* (fortress) in their names. The outline of the defence system of the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty is visible.¹ For example, the ancient town of Shuangying, built in Emperor Jiajing's reign of the Ming Dynasty, is the only existing ancient town in North China with a relatively intact original wall structure built with compacted earth. As a place of ethnic integration, Yanqing's folk culture is more related to the Great Wall culture, such as the post culture, the horse breeding culture, the iron smelting culture, and the Red Culture along the Great Wall. Take the postal-station culture as an example. As the only passage between the Mongolian Plateau and the North China Plain, Yanqing stood as a hub for the inspectors travelling between the two capitals during the Liao, Nüzhen Jin, and Yuan dynasties and now Yanqing still has the remains of three post roads. Incidentally, each of the dynasties adopted a "two capitals." There used to be four postal-roads between Shangdu, the Yuan Dynasty's summer capital, and Dadu, the Yuan's winter capital. Except for the one leading through Gubeikou in the Miyun District, the other three passed through the Yanqing area. The Emperor's exclusive *nianlu* (imperial chariot's road), in particular, started from Dadu, passing through the mountain opening at the Juyongguan Pass. It then led up to Badaling and continued northward, passing through the ancient counties and towns in the south and northeast of the present-day Yanqing District before climbing up the mountain from Heiyukou and entering the grasslands. After merging with the postal-road at the Niuquntou Post Station, it went straight to Shangdu. Xiao Yanyan, Empress Dowager Chengtian of the Liao Dynasty, had been to Yanqing several times, leaving many remains behind her, such

1 The "Comprehensive Volume" of The Great Wall Magnificently Situated in the North.





The Jiankou section of the Great Wall (2018)

as the Yingmeng Temple, the Goose Pond, and Yangfang. In this place, the Empress herded sheep. (5) The Yanqing section of the Great Wall is an important window for international exchanges. The Badaling section of the Great Wall in Yanqing was the first to be repaired and opened to the outside world after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Badaling section of the Great Wall, located at the north entrance of the Guangou Ancient Road in the Dujun Mountain in Yanqing District, Beijing, sits on the highest location on the northern part of the Great Wall's Guangou section. There, two peaks facing each other with a road lying in the middle. Therefore, looking down from a commanding height, the Badaling section of the Great Wall holds an extremely strategic place. So far, the Badaling section of the Great Wall has been visited by over 200 million Chinese and foreigners. It has received nearly 8.5 million tourists annually, including 513 world heads of state and more than 8,000 officials at the ministerial level. Government affairs reception platform and international exchange window.

The Great Wall in the Snow Cheers for the Olympic Winter Games

Hebei Province has been an important area for the construction of the Great Wall of China since ancient times. Rich in cultural heritage remains, the Hebei section of the Great Wall is a key construction area of the Great Wall National Culture Park. The existing Great Wall from the Warring States to the Ming Dynasty has a total length of 2,498.54 kilometres, ranking third in the country. The many Great Wall cultural resources are characterised by their quantity, large timespan, and diverse architectural forms. They are widespread and

of great value, showing that they meant a lot in protecting the Hebei section of the Great Wall. Simultaneously, they also prove how arduous, complex, and time-consuming the protection work will be.¹

Zhangjiakou of Hebei is located in the transitional area from the Mongolian Plateau to the North China Plain. Damaqun Mountain, the remaining part of the Yinshan Mountains in the west, cuts into the middle to connect to the Yanshan Mountains in the east and the northern end of the Taihang Mountains in the south, thus forming the natural boundary between the nomadic peoples of the Bashang Grasslands and the farming peoples of the Central Plains. Lying to the northwest of Beijing, Zhangjiakou has been a crucial battleground coveted by military strategists of all generations. It is regarded as the gateway to Beijing and its surrounding areas. The Great Wall found in Zhangjiakou is the longest in the country, and has the most extended timespan. The Great Wall traverses Zhangjiakou, a city with a land area of 37,000 square kilometres, from the Yanshan Mountains to the remaining part of the Yinshan Mountains. From the Warring States period to the Ming Dynasty, the Great Wall and its auxiliary buildings from eight eras converge here and spread across all counties and districts of the city. According to the Great Wall resources survey in Hebei Province, the total length of the Great Wall built in Zhangjiakou extends 1,804.85 kilometres. The Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty was 720.74 kilometres long, accounting for more than half of the total length of the Ming Great Wall in Hebei Province. It's rare for the Great Wall sections constructed by so many dynasties to be found in one region in China. Emperor Qin Shihuang mainly renovated the Northern Wall of Yan State, the Northern Wall of Zhao State, and the Qin State Wall, and built some sections of his own to link them

1 Plan for Building and Protecting the Great Wall National Culture Park (Hebei Section).

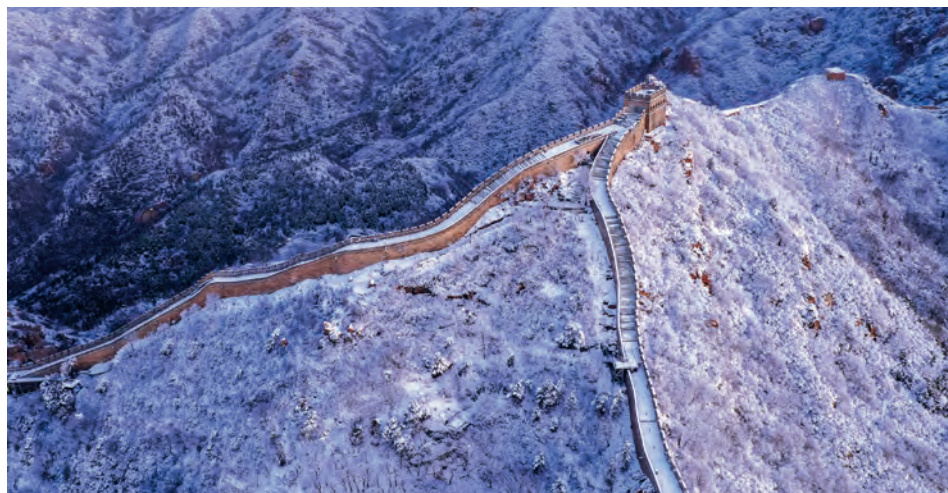
together. These sections, together with the Tang Great Wall, are rarely visible in historical records, and are unique to Zhangjiakou. From the Dajingmen Gate, called the “First Gate of the Great Wall,” to Youweicheng in Wanquan, the best-preserved Ming Dynasty military city in North China, to the Yangbian section reputed as the “model project of the Great Wall,” the Zhangjiakou section of the Ming Great Wall comprises various architectural structures, such as military towns, garrison towns, fortresses, battlements, beacon towers, and the linear walls. They present a full picture of the Great Wall’s in-depth defence system. Before the Ming Dynasty, many sections of the Great Wall had been built with Zhangjiakou as a starting point. They include the Northern Wall of Yan State, the Northern Wall of Zhao State, the Changchuan section of the Great Wall of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the southern line of the Great Wall of the Northern Wei Dynasty known as “Jishangsaiwei,” and the rare Tang Great Wall. “A map in hand I’m looking for a beautiful scene, I find the Great Wall in Zhangjiakou on top everything.” Zhangjiakou, traversed by many lines of the Great Wall, was responsible for the defence of the northern part of ancient China. The poet, Chen Fengheng of the Qing Dynasty, wrote this poem to describe the role of this “military town.”

As the venue for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games snow events, Chongli District in Zhangjiakou City is well-known worldwide for its long snow season and excellent snow quality. Few people know that there are many remains of the Great Wall lying in picturesque disorder on the rolling mountains covered in snow and ice. As the popularity of the Olympic Winter Games rises, these historic sites have come out from the unknown, revealing their hidden mystery. Chongli is where the sections of the Great Wall constructed in several dynasties concentrate. They are the Yan,

Northern Wei, and Ming sections of the Great Walls in the east; they connect to the Zhao section of the Great Wall in the west and the Northern Wei and Ming sections of the Great Walls in the south. The Qin and Han sections of the Great Wall in the north are rare in the country. Unlike other regions, the Great Wall in Chongli doesn’t run in a single line. It is, instead, a Great Wall network of multiple lines. The Great Wall sites in Chongli are roughly located in four regions: the west, the central, the east, and the south. The northern, eastern, and southern parts of Chongli border Zhangbei, Chicheng, and Xuanhua, respectively. They circle the Chongli District, making it a “city within the Great Wall.” In terms of their distribution, multiple dynasties have built these sections of the Great Wall for nearly 2,000 years. With a total length of 257.1 kilometres, they account for about one-tenth of the Great Wall sections in the entire Hebei Province. Specifically, they consist of 57 sections of the walls, 169 individual structures, four sites of stone tablets, inscriptions, and cliff carvings, and two Great Wall pass bastions. Those figures interpret the extraordinary historical value of the Great Wall sections in Chongli.

The Chongli Great Wall sections are made of a variety of materials with different techniques. The walls are made exquisitely of compacted earth, stone masonry, earth and rock mixture, stone laid without mortar, compacted earth with brick facing, or stone slabs with mortar. Where their shapes are concerned, they are either round or square with a flat roof. Many significant historical relics dot the Great Wall, such as the ruins of the Taizicheng (literally, Crown Prince City), the Xiangling (literally, Ringing Bell) Temple, and the Shizuizi site of the Longshan Culture in the Neolithic Age.

“The Great Wall in the snow cheers for the Olympic Winter Games.” Taizicheng, a snow and ice town in Chongli District, is



The Badaling section of the Great Wall (2021)

home to the Medals Plaza, the Winter Olympic Tower, the Beijing International Convention Centre, and the international resort hotel group. The town and the Great Wall close to it add radiance and beauty to each other. Together with ice and snow, the Great Wall of China has become a dazzling city symbol of Chongli. People are looking forward to the moment when the dream of “competing in the Olympic events at the foot of the Great Wall and enjoying its view during the competitions” will come true. The sections of the Great Wall built in seven dynasties converging in Chongli are gifts from remote history. The rendezvous of the Olympic Winter Games with the Great Wall turns the world’s attention to Chongli, a small town hidden in the mountains of North China, and also to the Great Wall there.

Making Ecological Conservation a Defining Feature of the “Green Olympic Games”

Talking about the 2022 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, President Xi Jinping put forward the concept of delivering

an Olympic Winter Games with a “green, inclusive, open and clean” approach which reflects the country’s new development vision and has been incorporated into the entire preparation process. Hosting a “Green Olympic Games” means we should prioritize ecological conservation, conserve resources and adhere to an environment-friendly approach to make ecological conservation a defining feature of the Games.

The Great Wall, its environs, and the venues of the Olympic Winter Games belong to the same ecosystem. To put the concept of “Green Olympic Games” into practice, we must prioritize the implementation of the principle of environmental protection in the whole process of planning, construction, operation, and post-game utilisation of the Winter Olympic venues. We must make overall plans for the ecological protection of the Great Wall and its surrounding areas as we construct and operate the Olympic Winter Games venues and carry out the plans simultaneously. We must pay attention to protecting the authenticity and integrity of the natural ecosystem and maximize the use of existing venues and facilities. We shall

construct or renovate the venues and facilities according to green building standards, protect the environment of the competition areas with high standards, and promote harmony between Man and Nature.

To this end, the Yanqing area management upholds the design concept of “building the venues in the mountains and forests to host an ecological Olympic Winter Games,” follows the nature’s law, and puts forward the concept of “close to nature and in line with local conditions.” In light of the traditional Chinese landscape culture, it will form a systematic environment construction plan and minimise the interference to the environment. Its purpose is to integrate the architectural structures with the natural landscape and Chinese landscape culture with the Olympic Winter Games culture to create an Olympic Winter Games competition area that blends into the mountains and forests. Before the ground-breaking in the

competition area in 2016, the design team and forestry, water, soil, and ecological experts traversed every inch of the competition area as they carried out the preliminary investigation of the area’s environment to provide scientific decision-making basis for planning the protection and restoration of the ecosystem. In this way, they delineated the ecological conservation boundary for the competition zone to minimise the impact of the construction of the Winter Olympic facilities on the environment. As a result, the core competition area Chongli alone boasts a forest area of 2.35 million *mu* (about 1,566.7 square kilometres). Its forest coverage rate has increased from 52% at the end of 2015 to 67%. Now, as the quality of the environment and ecosystem steadily improve, the concept of “Green Olympic Games” is deeply ingrained in the Chinese, becoming Zhangjiakou’s ecological brand name.

From “Ice and Snow” to “Ascending the Great Wall”

The Olympic Games is not only a sports arena but also a powerful platform for cultural integration. The interpretation of culture permeates all the aspects of the Olympic Games and enriches the embedded connotation of the Olympic Movement. The Beijing 2022 Games put forward the goal of engaging 300 million people in winter sports, which significantly promoted the development of winter sports in China. The Great Wall of China, as an important symbol of the country, allows the world to know and understand China more directly and effectively. By integrating the Great Wall elements into the whole preparation, hosting, and post-Games development process and inviting more foreign friends to climb and appreciate the Great Wall, China will promote its excellent traditional culture to the world with renewed vitality. Simultaneously, the world will be able to perceive the unique charm of the Chinese culture.

A Dialogue on Ice-Snow Culture Across Time and Space

The power of culture is extraordinary. The Olympic Games are the highest level of sports activities and a significant international cultural event. Sports, beautiful due to fierce athletic competition, embody a nation's culture and are part of a country's “soft power.” The excellent traditional Chinese culture is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese Nation, an essential source of the core values of socialism, and a solid foundation for us to gain a foothold in the ups and downs of world culture. All the ideologies and activities of the Olympic Movement, such as values, logos, mascots, and opening and closing ceremonies, are all manifestations of the Olympic culture. Hosting the Olympic Winter Games is an opportunity for exchanges, dialogues and integration between the cultures of the East and West.

China's traditional winter sports may trace their origins to ancient productive and



The Wulonggou section of the Great Wall (2017)

military activities which gradually evolved to become leisurely entertainment and eventually competitive performance – a process closely related to social and cultural changes. They have left behind a tremendous amount of heritage, such as ancient books, cultural remains, and precious, revered relics. They are a valuable asset of the Chinese culture and a concrete expression of Chinese wisdom and spirit. The advent of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will enable the Chinese winter sports culture and the Olympic Movement to promote and integrate with each other, and bring forth their fine qualities through international exchanges with various world civilisations.

China has a long history of winter sports, which are part of the excellent Chinese national culture. Studies have shown that China's Altay region is the world's oldest ski area and the origin of human skiing. The cultural remains,

rock paintings, and other historical remains left in Altay show that the earliest form of skiing occurred some 10,000 years ago in the late Paleolithic period.¹ In 2015, over 30 ski historians from 18 countries and regions, including China, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, jointly issued the Altay Declaration, proving that the idea that Altay is the birthplace of human skiing was once again recognised internationally. Winter sports in ancient China mostly involved hunting, military marches, and merrymaking. Enjoying and playing with snow were the major forms of ancient Chinese winter sports. Compared with sports on the snow, ice sports appeared later in China, but it was developed in a more diversified manner. According to *Xin Tangshu (New Book of Tang)*, “*Bayegu* is a winter activity found on the thousand-kilometre grassland in the area north of the Mongolian Plateau... Hunting is more popular than farming there. The hunters chase

¹ Cui Lequan and Zhang Hongxia. From Traditional Winter Sports to the Olympic Winter Games Culture: Communication Across Time and Space [J]. *Journal of Sports Research*, 2019 (1): 7–16.

deer on ice wearing wood-made devices.” It describes a hunting scene on ice, where the hunters were wearing a kind of wooden skates. The Song Dynasty already boasted a means of transport on ice known as *lingchuang* (“ice bed”), which became popular with both the royal family and the ordinary people of the Ming Dynasty as they used it to have fun on the ice. *Zhanche* (“a chariot for standing”), a dog-pulled sled-like means of transport on ice, appeared in the Yuan Dynasty. The Qing Dynasty saw the emergence of games on ice, such as *qiangqiu* (ball snatching), *zhuanlong sheqiu*, *baishanzi* (a team of skaters skate to form Chinese characters), *dahuada* (sliding), figure skating, and acrobatics. Those activities marked the climax of ancient winter sports in China.¹ Generally speaking, the skills of ancient Chinese winter sports reached quite a high level, which fully reflects the acrobatic nature of the Chinese traditional sports culture. “Frolic on the Ice,” a scroll painting by a court painter Zhang Weibang in Emperor Qianlong’s reign of the Qing Dynasty, depicts a scene of the ancients playing their popular games on the ice. Some, such as *shuangfeiyan* (a pair of swallows flying in the sky), *jinji duli* (a rooster standing on one foot), and *nezha naohai* (demigod Nezha conquers the dragon king), were like modern figure skating. Some, like *nongfan* (pole playing), *yuangan* (pole climbing), and *shuadiao* (sword juggling), are more characteristic of acrobatics.² At the same time, many winter sports athletes stood out, creating some unique routines on the ice. Examples include the “backflow” technique innovated by the young man named Haiying and the demanding “swallows skimming the water” technique initiated by Xigui, a young

man of the Miao ethnic group. Both lived in the era of Emperors Qianlong and Jiaqing. Another example is the “horse-riding” skating technique created by Shang Xingjie in Emperor Daoguang’s and Emperor Xianfeng’s reigns. They fully embodied the superb and exquisite winter sports skills of ancient China. The interest in winter sports has risen considerably since modern times. But sports have become more entertaining than competitive.

Ice and snow constitute a unique stage of activity granted to humankind by Mother Nature. Montesquieu said, “The cold climate gives the human mind or body a certain power, enabling people to engage in enduring, arduous, significant, and brave actions.” Whether it’s the traditional Chinese ice-snow culture or the Winter Olympic ice-snow culture, it’s a unique cultural form that organically combines the natural resources of ice and snow with the development of human civilisation. Traditional Chinese winter sports started due to geographical factors, developed due to production activities, evolved due to the Chinese cultural lives, and have eventually become a form of Chinese ice-snow culture marked by mass cultural leisure and national traits. The Western culture’s embrace of competition, human expression of the individual, and their inclination for science and cultural diversity have given the Olympic Winter Games winter sports their particular characteristics in terms of sports rules and competitive methods.

The Eastern and Western ice-snow cultures that span time and space will blend in China at the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. People will also witness a feast of exchanges and integration between the East

1 Ibid.: 7–16.

2 Zhang Hua & Zhang Dachun. Exploring the Sports on the Ice in the Qing Dynasty in Light of the “Frolic on the Ice” Painting [J]. *Winter Sports*, 2015(3): 32–34, 53.

and the West, traditional and modern, ice-snow cultures. Traditional Chinese winter sports culture will play a new symphony in world ice-snow culture in concert with the Winter Olympic culture originated from the West, thereby building a modern ice-snow culture of world significance.

Winter Sports Become Part of the Ordinary People's Lives

After the founding of the PRC, China's winter sports began to be modernised in full swing. As early as 2014, President Xi Jinping told IOC President Bach when attending the Sochi Olympic Winter Games, "In China, ice and snow sports do not usually happen on the southern side of Shanhaiguan Pass. If winter sports can be promoted there, two to three hundred million Chinese are expected to participate, thus igniting the torch of interest in winter sports among the Chinese people." Before the IOC voted on the right to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games on July 31, 2015, President Xi Jinping made a promise to the world in a video speech, "The Chinese people are looking forward to this opportunity. I believe that if you choose Beijing, the Chinese people will present to the world a fantastic, extraordinary, and excellent Olympic Winter Games to the world in Beijing!" "It will spur 300 million Chinese to participate in winter sports." It's not only a solemn promise made to the international community but also a robust measure to resolve the regional imbalance in the development of China's winter sports gradually. It will help more young people experience the joy and charm of winter sports and make them the Chinese lifestyle and a good way to keep fit.

Since then, "giving 300 million people in China access to winter sports" has become China's loudest voice for popularising

winter sports, and many policies have been formulated, issued, and implemented. The year after, the successful bid for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 coincides with the beginning of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The General Administration of Sport states in its 13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Sports Industry that it will take the opportunity of preparing for the Games to make a systematic plan for developing winter sports and related industry. It has brought forward the principles of "popularisation throughout the country, optimisation and promotion, market orientation, market guidance, taking advantage of local conditions, development of key projects, coordinated development, and integrated development." It proposes that, per those principles, by 2025, it will have built a more solid foundation for winter sports, significantly increased its penetration, and immensely enhanced China's competitive strength, creating a reasonably comprehensive winter sports industry. By then, people who participate in the winter sports directly will have exceeded 50 million, setting examples for another 300 million Chinese to follow. The same year, the National Plan for building Winter Sports Facilities (2016–2022) was formulated to clarify the goals, priorities, and standards for building winter sports facilities. Since then, China has promoted the strategy of all-round expansion of winter sports to southern and western China. It will take the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions as the leaders, the three provinces in Northeast China as the base, and the latecomer's advantage of the Northwest and North China regions like Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia as the leverage to promote the coordinated development of South China's winter sports. Its purpose is to form gradually a development pattern marked by an identified leader, coordinated regions, and expansion of multiple centres. In 2018,



The Huangyaguan section of the Great Wall (2021)

the General Administration of Sport of the PRC issued the Outline of the Initiative to Engage 300 Million People in Winter Sports (2018–2022). In 2019, the general offices of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the Opinions on Taking the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 as an Opportunity to Develop Winter Sports Vigorously. At present, China is implementing an strategy for the nationwide promotion of the winter sports which used to be popular only in North China. Many indoor ice rinks have been built in prosperous business districts of first-tier cities, and more ski resorts have mushroomed in low-latitude and high-altitude areas. Winter sports have gone beyond the limitation of time and space, spreading from the north to the other parts of the country, from winter to all seasons. This allows more people to participate in both ice and snow sports.

Mass sports are critical to the health of the people and the Healthy China initiative. The preparation for the Olympic Winter

Games Beijing 2022 is a process of organically combining professional competitive sports and nationwide fitness activities and promoting the combination. To this end, China has combined preparations for the Games with the popularisation of winter sports so that every Chinese person, particularly teenagers, will participate, making winter sports one of the nationwide fitness activities. Teenagers are the main force and vanguards of winter sports, forming the base of the pyramid, so to speak, of the national winter sports campaign. China will attach great importance to bringing winter sports to schools to deepen the reform of school sports and promote the modernisation of education at large. It will make painstaking efforts to bring about a situation where a model of “winter-sports-featured schools + Winter Olympic education demonstration schools + high-quality college winter sports teams + winter sports pilot counties or districts” will be promoted in coordination. It will be a model covering the entire school years, the

whole process, and multi-dimensions. As of 2020, three hundred and thirty-five secondary education institutions had been selected to be Olympic education demonstration schools and another 2,062 to be winter sports schools nationwide. By doing so, China expects to bring winter sports to more schools to enrich their physical education and foster their students' positive, healthy lifestyles. China will effectively enable the young students to "enjoy the fun, build up their physique, improve their personality, and temper their will through the physical exercises."

What best epitomises China's ceaseless effort towards the goal of "engaging 300 million people in winter sports" is undoubtedly the National Public Ice and Snow Season that has been held seven times. Born in 2014 to help bid for the Olympic Winter Games, it has become a well-known event to implement the national fitness strategy and promote the popularisation of winter sports. The actions of each season attracted millions of people, satisfying their diversified need for fitness in winter and playing a leading role in promoting the campaign to spur 300 million Chinese to participate in winter sports. The seventh National Public Ice and Snow Season (2020–2021) attracted nearly 100 million visitors from 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and 184 prefectures and cities across the country to participate in 1,200 events or receive training on the knowledge of winter sports.

Come and Ski at the Foot of the Great Wall

Winter sports are not just athletic but also cultural. Practising them is a way of life and a coordinated development model of a healthy, ecological industry. "Involving 300 million people in winter sports" is an opportunity

for China's winter sports industry and winter sports worldwide. Hosting the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will stimulate the entire consumer market to a large extent and drive the overall development of related industries such as winter sports and ice-snow tourism. Olympic Winter Games is a comprehensive culture and tourism intellectual property (IP) integrating various industries, easily recognizable and automatically generating visitor traffic. The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 is a major athletic event and cultural feast held at the foot of the Great Wall. With this IP trump card for the blended development of culture and tourism, we shall invite friends from all over the world to experience Chinese stories and the charm of the Olympic Winter Games through ascending the Great Wall in the ice and snow.

"We can go to a city (wall) because of a mascot, a play, a song, or a poem." Culture is the soul of tourism, tourism is the carrier of culture, and IP is the spokesperson of cultural tourism. The year 2016 is known for IP explosion. Cartoons, animated films, films, games, music, performing arts, and other entertainment industries have built a new ecology of intellectual property rights with IP as the core. Cultural tourism IP has received widespread attention and is related to consumption upgrades and the enrichment and enhancement of products' embedded cultural connotations. Improving the value of tourism products and services through IP operations is the key to cultural tourism that drives the complex development of the regional economy and society. The high-quality development of cultural tourism is inseparable from the cultivation and support of super IPs. A cultural tourism IP is equivalent to a unique business empire and a culturally independent kingdom. Take Disney as an example. Starting as a cartoon studio, Disney gradually built its

presence in publishing, movies, and theme parks. However, what makes Disney unique is none of its products, but the American culture behind them—an adventurous spirit, Protestant ethics, individualism, and the collective ethos essential to the country. Together, they have miraculously turned a mouse into a cultural IP in the world.

The Great Wall of China and the Chinese culture that it represents give the Games a unique cultural essence. During the preparations for the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, the Great Wall was also one of the indispensable Chinese elements. For example, at the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Cultural Festival, the first Olympic spectacular of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 was completed on the Badaling section of the Great Wall. It marked that Beijing enjoyed its own unique city Olympic mark like other Olympic host cities. Traditionally, *ding* is an ancient Chinese cauldron made of bronze, and Jun ware is a type of ceramics produced by one of the Five Great Kilns of the Song Dynasty. The Jun ware “Great Wall Ding” for the Beijing 2008 Games was selected as China’s diplomatic gift during the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, becoming a beautiful messenger promoting and showcasing the splendid traditional Chinese culture to friends from all over the world. The Great Wall elements also found their way into the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. The Application for the Right to Host the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 proposed that Beijing integrate the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 with the Great Wall culture as a geographical dimension, the Spring Festival culture as a time dimension, and the centennial Olympic Games and its elements. The application promised to create a rich cultural heritage and provide a unique experience for the Olympic family. The perfect integration of the splendid Chinese culture

with the Olympic Winter Games will give the Olympic Games and its participating athletes worldwide a unique experience and beautiful enjoyment. building the Winter Olympic venues is the top priority of the preparations for the games. When inspecting the Games preparations in Zhangjiakou on January 23, 2017, President Xi Jinping pointed out with profoundness, “(The preparations) must reflect Chinese elements and local characteristics. We must strictly implement energy conservation and environmental protection standards and protect the environment and cultural remains, so that modern buildings, natural landscape, history, and culture can enhance one another’s beauty. I hope they will become high-quality assets worth inheriting and benefiting the people and that they’ll become a new brand name for the city.” For this reason, the venues for the Olympic Winter Games have been designed embodying the principle of combining athletic professionalism and culture. The integration of the venues’ visual effects and the physical space of the Great Wall has been fully considered. As a result, the Great Wall culture and elements have been organically integrated into the construction of the venues. Additionally, the Great Wall elements have also been integrated into the supporting facilities of transport, communication, medical care, catering, and accommodation during their construction, achieving the effect of the magnificent scenery inside and outside the Great Wall complementing each other with the layouts of the venues. That is, modern elements and historical culture add to each other’s magnificence and splendour. At the same time, a series of theatrical performances, cultural exhibitions, and tourism experience activities have been carried out in the areas along the Great Wall and its environs by taking advantage of the profound cultural heritage along the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing.

Those cultural activities have organically integrated the Olympic spirit with the Great Wall culture. They will continue throughout the Olympic Winter Games, including its preparations, opening, and conclusion. Their purpose is to allow people from all over the world to enjoy the extraordinary Olympic events at the foot of the Great Wall and China's most fantastic cultural performances.

With the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing as the central theme, we shall work hard to create a "Great Wall + Olympic Winter Games" quality tourist route. "The history of the Olympic Movement shows that the Olympic Games and tourism are twinned." Culture is the essential attribute of sports and tourism. Only when we integrate culture into the whole process of tourism can the tourism industry be prosperous and enduring. The Sixth Working Conference on the Coordinated Development of Tourism in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region promulgated the Declaration on the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Demonstration Zone of Coordinated Development of Tourism. The declaration proposed that Miyun, Yanqing, Chengde, and Zhangjiakou jointly build an ecological (ice-snow) tourism sphere in northern Beijing and that Yanqing and Zhangjiakou establish the Beijing-Zhangjiakou Sports Cultural Tourism Belt together. The Great Wall, along with its culture, is an essential part of the sphere and the belt. According to the declaration, we must package the brands of the Great Wall culture and the Olympic Winter Games to plan the construction of the "Great Wall + Olympic Winter Games" quality tourism route. We'll carry out the projects by taking advantage of the preparatory work for the Olympic Winter Games and the subsequent development and utilisation of the Winter Olympic legacy. We'll work out an overall plan for the construction projects along the Great Wall, spatial arrangement, collaborative management, and service systems.

We must strengthen the cooperation between Beijing and Zhangjiakou to develop jointly several tourism projects that meet international standards and reflect regional cultural characteristics. Developing the tourist routes will improve the residents' living standards and life quality along the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing and make the development between urban and rural areas and the growth among different regions more balanced.

With the Olympic Winter Games as an opportunity, we'll promote the construction of several beautiful villages at the foot of the Great Wall. The projects can proceed from social media influencers signing in to the ultimate establishment of in-depth cultural tourism IPs. The 19th National Congress of the CPC set the goal of "building China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful" by the middle of the 21st century. Beautiful rural areas constitute an essential part of beautiful China. The 19th National Congress of the CPC put forward the rural revitalisation strategy for the first time and requested that China "build rural areas with thriving businesses, pleasant living environments, social etiquette and civility, effective governance, and prosperity." The traditional Chinese villages and folk culture villages congregating or scattered along the Great Wall Cultural Belt in Beijing is an essential part of the belt and a crucial window for showcasing the Great Wall culture and allowing visitors to experience traditional culture. It's necessary to use the post-Games operation and subsequent development as an opportunity to better arrange the ancient villages along the Great Wall systematically and create several beautiful villages at the foot of the Great Wall. To build the beautiful villages at the foot of the Great Wall, "no large-scale demolition and construction are to be carried out in the existing villages, particularly the ancient ones,





The Huangyaguan section of the Great Wall (2020)

which must be well protected.” As per the requirements of “maintaining the integrity, authenticity, and continuity of traditional villages,” we must attach great importance to the concept of highlighting the natural landscape, respecting the mountain features, and harmoniously co-existing with Nature. Under the premise of ensuring safety, we’ll continue the small-cluster structures distributed along the winding Great Wall to form a vivid spatial morphology. At the same time, it’s necessary that we pay more attention to intrinsic cultural connotations, inherit historical culture, and fully respect the lifestyles and customs of the residents to meet the requirements of modern life while reflecting regional characteristics so that traditional residences can survive and last. We must construct mini landscapes and public spaces that reflect local cultural characteristics by borrowing from the villages’ cultural legends, landscapes, and folk activities. We must further improve the management mechanism for planning and building beautiful villages and continuously improve the quality of infrastructure and public service facilities so that people living in these beautiful villages can share a better life and look forward to an even better future.

Transform Ice and Snow into Invaluable Assets

One of the important considerations and meanings to prepare for the Olympic Winter Games is to benefit the people and enhance their sense of happiness and gain. It’s also one of the primary purposes of planned sustainable development. Poverty is a huge gap that lies in the face of world development, and it is a chronic disease of human Society. Eradicating poverty is the dream of humankind, and the history of human development has been the history of the unrelenting struggle

against poverty. As one of the three major competition zones of the Olympic Winter Games, Zhangjiakou was once one of the poorest areas in Hebei Province, with the most poverty-stricken population around Beijing. Take Chongli District, Zhangjiakou City, for example. It’s a community of 120,000 residents on the northern side of the Great Wall. With the continuous progress in China’s poverty alleviation work and the advent of the Olympic Winter Games, Chongli attracted about 30,000 people to its winter skiing and summer outdoor sports activities. The Chongli people can now live on the preparatory work for the coming Olympic Winter Games. People say “living on the snow.” Chongli’s transformation represents China’s hard work in poverty alleviation and vividly demonstrates China’s effort to fight against poverty.

“Ice and snow are resources, and coldness is an advantage.” Since 2015, Chongli District has engaged in the endeavour to raise its people from poverty pursuant to the overall requirement of “Two No Worries and Three Guarantees” (“two no worries”: achieving the goal of poverty alleviation so that those who have been living in poverty no longer have to worry about food and clothing; and “three guarantees”: achieving the goal of guaranteeing compulsory education, basic medical treatment and housing security). It has focused its fight against poverty on ensuring people’s living standards and adjusting its industrial structure. Integrating the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games, it has made steady efforts to eradicate poverty by making “targeted efforts in six areas”: identifying the poor accurately, arranging targeted programmes, utilising capital efficiently, taking household-based measures, dispatching first Party secretaries based on village conditions, and achieving the set goals. To that end, they have taken five measures for poverty eradication: boosting the



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2020)

economy to provide more job opportunities, relocating poor people from inhospitable areas, compensating for economic losses associated with reducing ecological damage, improving education in impoverished areas, and providing subsistence allowances for those unable to shake off poverty through their own efforts. Thereby, they have addressed the “five questions in poverty alleviation”: who should help, who should be helped, how to help, how to evaluate whether someone has emerged from poverty, and how to ensure those people stay free from poverty. By May 2019, Chongli had reduced its poverty incidence to 0.038%, lifting its people out of poverty. Chongli has transformed from an impoverished county into a winter sports resort with an “international appeal.”

Pairing the eastern and western regions in alleviating poverty, with the former assisting the latter, is an important strategy to promote coordinated and shared regional development.

In other words, it’s to draw on the eastern region’s strength to offset the western region’s weakness and an essential attempt to explore a new poverty alleviation model – one likened to helping the western region generate blood in place of blood transfusion. The strategy provides institutional support for narrowing the development disparities between the eastern and the western regions and stimulating the latter’s potential for sustainable development. Beijing doesn’t have people living below the national poverty line, but it provides poverty-alleviation support to 90 counties in Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai, and other provincial-level regions. Beijing has always taken cooperation and counterpart assistance in poverty alleviation as its glorious political task, obligatory duty, and inescapable responsibility. Working with frenetic energy, Beijing heightens awareness of priorities, adheres to the best standards, gives full play to the advantages of a capital city, carries forward

the spirit of innovation, and strives for primary benefits. Beijing's Dongcheng District assisted Chongli District in Zhangjiakou by pairing with it. Dongcheng regarded counterpart assistance as its obligatory duty and its district affair. The two districts sent *ad hoc* administrators to each other and carried out cross-district staff training sessions. By so doing, Dongcheng District improved the administrative competency of Chongli District's leaders rooted in the district. By establishing a long-term assistance mechanism, Dongcheng District worked hard with Chongli to solve its social development problems. They included substandard education, healthcare, and infrastructure, bringing high-quality educational resources such as prestigious academic institutions to full play. Through pairing assistance, Dongcheng improved the professional competence of Chongli District's teachers to prevent poverty from inter-generational transmission. The innovation of the "Poverty Alleviation through Internet + Healthcare" model has paved the last leg of the way leading to poverty alleviation because it has given rise to a stable mechanism immune against slipping back into poverty. Development is the most effective way to eradicate poverty and the soundest way to create a happy life. This Dongcheng-Chongli counterpart assistance model fully tapped Chongli's resources and geographical and industrial advantages, focused on alleviating poverty by developing industries and continuously stimulated the endogenous driving force for development. As a result, Dongcheng District's assistance to Chongli District has proved to be dignified instead of condescending. It's fair to say that the miraculous ice-snow relationship between the two districts has been "civilised" and "courteous." This case of counterpart assistance has been an exploratory effort to put

the "inclusive" development concept and the "embedded" development theory to practice. Through regional cooperation, it has provided a set of universally applicable and sustainable "Beijing Experience" for targeted poverty alleviation.

At the end of 2020, China, which accounts for one-fifth of the world's population, announced to the world, "China has accomplished its poverty alleviation target of the new era as scheduled." It noted that all the impoverished rural populations had been out of poverty according to the current poverty standard, and China had eliminated absolute and regional poverty. As the largest developing country globally with a population of 1.4 billion, China has created a miracle in the history of human poverty reduction. China has successfully lifted 750 million people out of poverty and achieved the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ten years ahead of schedule in the past four decades of reform and opening-up. By doing so, China has significantly reduced the world's poor population and contributed over 70% of the world's poverty alleviation quota, thus making significant contributions to realising a better and prosperous world described by Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has thus significantly accelerated the global poverty reduction process, writing a new chapter in the human's anti-poverty history. "China is the first developing country to show the world how to eradicate poverty, and this feat is a historic achievement." "China has brought hope and set an example to other developing countries." "China is the biggest contributor to global poverty reduction." In many countries, politicians, experts, and the media did not hesitate to praise China's major victory in poverty alleviation.

The Winter Olympic Legacy and the Post-Games Development

The Olympic Games are more exciting because of the host city, and the city is better because of the Olympic Games. The Olympic legacy is the core element of the sustainable development of the Olympic Movement. The planning and development of the Olympic legacy is an essential task for the organisers of the Olympic Games and the cities hosting the events. From the Beijing 2008 Games to the Beijing 2022 Games, China has been committed to solving the problems of Olympic legacy and post-Games sustainable development. With the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games, operation of the venues, and holding the events, China will maximize the function and influence of the Olympic Movement. It will create a more valuable Olympic legacy in sports, culture, education, environment, venues, and urban infrastructure and promote reasonable follow-up development and utilisation in the post-Games period.

A New Starting Point for Sustainable Development

For a city or a region, an Olympic legacy begins soon after the successful bid to host the Games. According to the latest IOC definition, the Olympic legacy is the result of realising the vision of the Olympic Games, including all tangible and intangible long-term positive benefits brought or delivered with acceleration to the public, the cities, the regions, and the Olympic Movement through hosting the Olympic Games. In essence, the Olympic legacy belongs to the category of sustainable development of humankind.

In September 2015, world leaders adopted Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at a historic United Nations summit. It points out the direction and outlines the blueprint for all countries' development in the world and international development cooperation in the next 15 years. It also promotes the formation



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2021)

of a global consensus on the concept of sustainable development. The agenda states that we recognise that sports are making greater contributions to promoting social peace and development in the following areas: promoting inclusiveness and respect; empowering women, youth, individuals, and communities; and promoting health, education, and social inclusion. The Olympic Movement's concept of sustainable development stems from environmental protection. In continuous development, the idea of sustainable development has found its way into all aspects of the Olympic Movement. The harmonious relationship between Man and Nature, Man and Society, and Man-Man is at the core of the sustainable development of the Olympic Movement. Its development goal is to create a better world based on realising the all-round development of the Olympic Movement intra- and inter-generationally. Under the global trend, the sustainable development of the

Olympic legacy not only relates to the Olympic Movement's reform but also affects the long-term and healthy development of the host cities and regions. The Olympic legacy emphasises the long-term positive impact on the host cities or regions and their peoples, which is closely related to the purpose of the Olympic Movement of building a better world. As an important content throughout the Olympic Games, the Olympic legacy has to a certain extent become the key to the sustainable development of the Olympic Movement and a crucial indicator for the IOC to measure the success of the Olympic Games. However, it has taken the IOC a long process to understand the Olympic legacy. Before the 1950s, the concept didn't catch people's attention as they never associated the Olympic Games with legacy for later generations. The idea first appeared in the Olympic document in 1951. The Olympic legacy gradually became a competitive advantage repeatedly mentioned

by various bidding countries during the application stage. It became an indispensable part of the application for the right to host the 2022 Olympic Games. Since the 1990s, the IOC has initiated a series of reforms with “sustainable development” as the core. In 1996, clauses of sustainable development first appeared in the Olympic Charter. In 1999, the Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21 made it its social responsibility to promote global sustainable development fully. In 2000, the IOC proposed strengthening the support of the international Olympic Movement for social and human development. In 2003, the IOC included “Olympic legacy” in the Olympic Charter as one of its functions and missions. It officially launched the planning, evaluation, and research system in the Olympic Impact Report.

In bidding for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games and the 2024 Olympic Summer Games, many cities withdrew midway. The Organising Committee for the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which is deeply in debt due to the Olympic Games, has left many venues unused. The much sought-after Olympic Games seem no longer so popular. In this context, at the 127th plenary meeting of the IOC held in Monte Carlo, Monaco adopted the Olympic Agenda 2020 on December 8, 2014. It was a critical reform document in the Olympic Movement. The Olympic Agenda 2020 puts forward 40 reform recommendations centring on three themes: developing sustainably, increasing credibility, and attracting young people. The core content is to reduce the cost of bidding for the Olympic Games and their operation, sustainable development, increase in credibility, and focus on humanistic care. The Olympic Agenda 2020 lists “sustainability” as the core element of the Olympic Movement and puts it at the forefront of the Olympic development. Recommendation 4 suggests including “sustainability in all aspects of the

Olympic Games,” while Recommendation 5 proposes “sustainability within the Olympic Movement’s daily operations.” The Olympic Agenda 2020 is the most important guiding document for the Olympic Movement’s reform issued by the IOC in recent years. It’s a panoramic depiction of the Olympic Movement’s future development. After announcing the Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC successively promulgated the IOC Sustainability Strategy, the Legacy Strategic Approach, and the Olympic Games: New Norms in 2017 and 2018. Those guides have guaranteed the implementation of the Olympic Games Agenda 2020 to a certain extent, effectively promoting the reform of the Olympic Movement in the new era. It has also pushed the penetration of the idea of sustainability in all aspects of the Olympic Movement.

Together for a Shared Future

Creating a rich legacy of the Olympic Winter Games and bringing long-term positive benefits to the host country, the host city, and the people therein are essential parts of the preparations for the Olympic Games. They are also indicators to determine whether an Olympic Games are successfully hosted.

The 2022 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are the first Olympic Games after the IOC promulgated the Olympic Agenda 2020. The 2022 Olympic Winter Games jointly hosted by Beijing and Zhangjiakou will be hosted by cities and regions with dense populations, heavy environmental pollution, uneven development, and unequal distribution of social resources. It’s an opportunity to explore how to contribute to building demonstrative cities of sustainability due to improving human settlements’ environment and achieving high-quality

economic development to improve people's lives. Sustainable urban development is the basic principle and primary goal of planning and managing the legacy of the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. For Beijing and Zhangjiakou to host the Olympic Winter Games together is of great significance to realize the national strategic goal of promoting the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions. To this end, the Bid Committee for the Beijing 2022 Games put forward the three bidding concepts: sustainable development, athlete-centredness, and economic Olympic Games. Those concepts are highly consistent with the reform initiated in the Olympic Agenda 2020 to reduce the cost of bidding and management, foster sustainable development, increase credibility, and focus on humanistic care. Beijing and Zhangjiakou's joint bid to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games directly responds to the reform measures of the Olympic Games Agenda 2020 on jointly hosting the Olympic Games in multiple cities.

Since the successful bid, President Xi Jinping has issued a series of important instructions regarding the preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. He pointed out that we must deliver the Olympic Winter Games in a "green, inclusive, open, and clean" manner by prioritising "simplicity, safety, and excellence." To deliver the Olympic Games in a green manner, we must insist on prioritising environment protection, conserving resources, and making the preparations environmentally friendly to host a fantastic Winter Olympic event with Chinese characteristics. To deliver the Olympic Games inclusively, we must insist on participation, concerted efforts, and sharing so that the Olympic Winter Games can have a good social effect. To deliver the Olympic Games openly, we must face the world, the future, and modernisation, so that

the Olympic Winter Games will boost China's opening up to the outside world. To deliver the Olympic Games cleanly, we must be diligent and thrifty, putting an end to corruption, improving efficiency, and having a zero-tolerance policy against doping to make the Olympic Winter Games as pure and flawless as ice and snow. Hosting the Olympic Winter Games in an "athlete-centred, sustainable, and frugal" way and a "green, inclusive, open, and clean" manner implements the sustainable development concept proposed in the Olympic Agenda 2020.

We must create a new model for the Olympic Games and regional sustainable development. Since the successful bid to host the Olympic Winter Games, Beijing 2022 has attached great importance to sustainability, making it one of its overall priorities. The committee formulated the Sustainability Plan of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. It identifies the Games' vision and goal of sustainability and establishes action measures for "positive environmental impact," "regional new development," and "improved life quality." The plan closely integrates the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games with the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions' coordinated development strategy and its long-term development plan. According to the plan, efforts will be made to promote the improvement of the regional environment, economic development, and social progress so that urban development can effectively guarantee the success of the Games. The plan expects the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games to accelerate the sustainable development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions to create a new model of positive interactions of the Olympic Movement with the host cities and regions—a "win-win" model of development.

The development of sports is closely related to the natural environment and is

restricted by it. Winter sports stadiums' planning, site selection, construction, and operation will inevitably affect the natural environment. At the onset of applying for the right to host the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, China recognised the seriousness of this problem. Beijing 2022 and the Governments of Beijing and Zhangjiakou have worked together to build and use the Olympic venues by complying with these requirements: placing ecology first, steadily improving environmental quality, and hosting low-carbon, sustainable Olympic Winter Games to cope with climate change and obeying such principles: prioritising ecology, green development, resource conservation, and environmental friendliness. They will deliver the Olympic Winter Games with some Chinese characteristics by maximising the use of existing venues and facilities to improve the Beijing-Zhangjiakou area's environmental quality and proactively deal with climate changes. Their ultimate purpose is to strive for a low-carbon Olympic Games and promote a green, cyclic economy.

The Olympic Games are a catalyst for the sustainable development of the host city, capable of improving regional environmental quality and economic development and increasing the city's subsequent development momentum. The Sustainability Plan of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 proposes that the Olympic Winter Games preparatory work forcefully drive the regional coordinated development. The plan also suggests that the Olympic Winter Games be closely integrated with the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions. Simultaneously, the significant problems of unbalance and inadequacy arising during the development must be tackled to create the total value of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in

economic, environmental, and social aspects, thus promoting a higher-level regional development. The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions will improve the urban barrier-free environments by accelerating their infrastructure construction, raising urban management, and increasing service support capacity. It will speed up building the Beijing-Zhangjiakou Cultural Belt, with winter sports and tourism industries as starting points to upgrade winter sports consumption. It will also promote the transformation and utilisation of scientific and technological achievements, and cultivate new economic growth points, thus injecting new impetus into the Regions' long-term development.

Promoting social progress through sports is at the heart of the Olympic Movement's tasks. The preparations for the Games will promote the popularisation of China's winter sports. It will boost the comprehensive growth of people in various professions and occupations, improve public health, and enhance social cohesion by attracting more stakeholders. To better people's lives, we must adhere to the people-centred development thinking during the entire process of the Olympic Winter Games: preparation, hosting, and post-Games development. At the core of the principle are simultaneous participation, concerted efforts, and shared benefits, which aim at achieving an excellent social effect to live up to the broad mass's expectations of a better life. We must speed up the training of talents, properly resettle the competition areas' residents, and lift the low-income residents out of poverty, thereby promoting the integration of the Olympic Winter Games with human development. We must vigorously carry forward the Olympic spirit and further popularize winter sports to help the people form an active, healthy, civilised lifestyle and effectively enhance their sense of gain and

happiness. We'll carry forward the Chinese culture, foster wholesome social conduct, and improve social etiquette and civility.

On September 17, 2021, at the 140-day countdown to the opening of 2022 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, its theme slogan was officially released: "Together for a Shared Future." The slogan is in line with the Chinese initiative to build a global community of shared future, embodies the concept of delivering a "green, shared, open, and clean" Olympic Games and meets the common demand that the world needs to work together for a better future under the current situation of fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. It's also in agreement with the core values and visions of the Olympic Movement and the Paralympics: the pursuit of unity, peace, progress, and inclusiveness.¹ The slogan "Together for a Shared Future" echoes to "One World, One Dream" raised in the Olympic Games Beijing 2008, and demonstrates characteristics of the times. Beijing, as a "Dual Olympic City" leaves the Olympic spirit and concept another Chinese mark.

The Post-Games Era

China will use its Olympic venues for a long time by inheriting some from the Beijing 2008 Games and reusing them innovatively. Making use of the Olympic venues after the Games are over presents a "world problem." As a "Dual Olympic City," Beijing has a wealth of Olympic legacy, especially in infrastructure, including sports venues. The Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 will best use what the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 have left. Six of the Olympic Winter Games' main venues in the Beijing zone are

legacies from the 2008 Olympic Games. For this reason, Beijing 2022 insists on planning for renovating the structures and expanding the functions of the existing Olympic venues with innovative technology, trying to turn most of them into dual-use for summer and winter seasons. Where newly-built venues are concerned, their post-Games use will be considered during the designing phase, with the focus on mass sports and fitness needs. Today, every Winter Olympic venue has a development plan that focuses on the post-Games era. The premises at the end of the "handle" of the "Snow Ruyi," nicknamed after the National Ski Jumping Centre, will be used as a conference and exhibition hall and reception space for tourists after the Olympic Winter Games, paving the way for this venue's sustainable use. The glittering and translucent National Speed Skating Oval, nicknamed the "Ice Ribbon," boasts 12,000 square metres of ice surface made of module-control units. It will accommodate 2,000 Beijing residents simultaneously to enjoy the sports of ice hockey, figure skating, and curling after the Olympic Winter Games are over. The water-ice-transitional Beijing National Aquatics Centre, also known as the "Water Cube," will be used for water sports in spring, summer, and autumn and winter sports in winter. Opening the Olympic Winter Games venues to the public to improve national fitness is precisely the result of the "inclusive Olympic Games" ideal. It also adds brilliance to the idea of planning and building the Beijing 2022 venues to last "a hundred years."

We must make good use of the prime time of the Olympic Winter Games and keep winter sports up all the time. Driven by the

¹ Wu Wei. "Together for a Shared Future": The Theme Slogan for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 Is Released [N]. *The Beijing News*, 2021-09-17.



The Wulonggou section of the Great Wall (2018)

goal of “encouraging 300 million people to participate in winter sports,” winter sports have become increasingly popular in China since the successful bid for the right to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games. Taking the opportunity of preparing for the Olympic Winter Games, China has kept optimising its policies on winter sports. As a result, all kinds of mass winter sports activities have mushroomed in increasingly improved venues, thus steadily enhancing the quality of competitive winter sports events. More and more people, including teenagers, participate in winter sports on skating rinks and ski resorts. Disabled people, in particular, have found it easier to reintegrate Society through participating in winter sports. China’s winter sports have entered the golden period of rapid development. The dream to “encourage 300 million people to participate in winter sports” is coming true. After the Winter Games, China’s top priority is to inspire the public to embrace winter sports with the same enthusiasm and turn “cold ice and snow” into

“hot economic results” and athletic events into popular activities, thus keeping the winter sports going. We must guide and cultivate positive and wholesome sports consumption habits, lead the public to consume healthy and sustainable winter sports products and services, and emphasise the public’s participation to gear sports consumption toward keeping people fit. We will upgrade winter sports venues so that they can operate smartly via telecommunication networks by applying the technologies of the Internet, big data, and artificial intelligence. We will discover and cater to the users’ preferences to create a sports model that satisfies consumer groups with various propensities – a model with heightened consumer perception and more choices. We will work to integrate the construction of winter sports venues with tourism, housing, and other projects like leisure facilities and accelerate the construction of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou Winter Sports Cultural Tourism Belt to refine the integrated winter-sports industrial chain. We

will increase the overall level of winter-sports equipment manufacturing, sports training, sports event services, healthcare management, and intermediary services to build a complete winter-sports industrial chain. We will continue to popularize winter sports among young people to cultivate athletic talents, and encourage long-term participation in and sustainable development of winter sports, thus making them part of the general public's cultural lives.

We'll carry forward the green concept to brighten the colour base of China with the beauty of ice and snow. Ecology is the most important legacy left by the Games to Beijing and its surrounding region. The legacy report of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 shows that as of the end of 2019, the air quality in Beijing and Zhangjiakou has improved significantly, and the annual average concentration of particulate matter (PM2.5) in the air has dropped by 47.9% and 26% respectively compared with 2015. The Beijing-Zhangjiakou sand control has achieved remarkable results, and the forest coverage of the two cities has continued to increase. The forest coverage of Beijing reached 44% in 2019, an increase of 2.4% compared with 2015. And the forest coverage of Zhangjiakou reached 50% in 2019, an increase of 13% compared with 2015. The water quality in the Beijing-Zhangjiakou region continues to improve. In 2019, the sewage treatment rate in Beijing reached 94.5%, a 6.6% increase over 2015. Those figures testify that China is fulfilling its promise to the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 and interpret China's efforts to build an ecological civilisation in this region. Olympic Winter Games are periodic, but there's no end to creating an environmental culture. With the successful end of the Olympic Winter Games as the starting point, Beijing and Zhangjiakou will work hand in

hand to construct their ecological civilisation, which has entered a new cycle. Particularly, China will further build the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions' ecological civilisation with respect for nature, conformity to nature, and protection of nature as its core. China will keep consolidating the mechanism and mode of civilisation construction taking shape during the Olympic Winter Games preparatory period, thus creating a model of "human and nature are a community of shared life."

We need to implement people-centred development principles and open a new chapter of more balanced and higher-quality development. As cities are people's cities, their construction must align with the people-centred principles of growth to improve people's lives. It's Beijing's goal and responsibility in its urban development. Promoting the all-round development of people is at the core of the modern Olympic spirit. Letting the whole of Society share the fruits of construction and development is the basic principle of the Games. The preparation for the Olympic Winter Games is a process of practicing the principles of people-centred development and increasing the sense of gain and happiness of the people in Beijing and Zhangjiakou. The inter-city transport network of "one high-speed rail, multiple main lines" shortened the journey time between Beijing and Chongli from more than three hours to 46 minutes. The requirement for providing support services at a uniform standard time in the three competition zones of Beijing, Yanqing, and Zhangjiakou allows the sharing of Beijing's high-quality medical and educational resources with Zhangjiakou. The Olympic Winter Games will boost the two cities' economies and change their development mode by the constructed competition venues and other infrastructure projects, the joint efforts to protect the environment and control pollution, the collaborative creation and sharing

of public services, the counterpart assistance, and the regional collaborations. In the post-Games era, we must continue to inherit the people-centred development principles running through the preparations for the Olympic Winter Games. We'll focus on people's overall development and take people-centred values as the core orientation of promoting regional development. We'll ensure that the effect and spirit of the Olympic Winter Games will inject impetus into regional development to lead the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Regions in achieving higher-quality and coordinated development. We'll continuously improve the critical yardstick of urban services and management, meet people's needs with better supplies, serve them with the best resources, and provide more opportunities to help everyone succeed.

The spiritual and cultural legacy is an integral part of the Olympic legacy. The Chinese spirit represented by collectivism and patriotism demonstrated in the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 impressed spectators from around the world. Based on the 2008 Olympic Games, the 2022 Olympic Winter Games will showcase Chinese culture more extensively and in-depth and promote the world's understanding and recognition of China. At the same time, the volunteers, the talents, the operational command, and the service guarantee

mechanism formed in the preparation of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008 are the precious legacy left to us. They will be inherited in the preparation and hosting of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. During the preparations for the Games, these heritages were fully utilised. Many dual Olympic volunteers and staff are contributing to the Olympic Winter Games. The dual entry and venue-based work model is being rejuvenated with new vitality, and the Olympic experience will be carried on further and more extensively. The stories about China told to spread the Olympic spirit will be retold repeatedly throughout the preparation and hosting of the Olympic Winter Games and the post-Games development. We shall explore the cultural and spiritual values of the Winter Olympic legacy and try to pinpoint the match point of traditional Chinese culture and the Winter Olympic spirit. We will continue to promote international exchanges of winter sports culture based on the current global issues of common interest, such as the concept of green Olympic Games, environmental protection, low-carbon development, and poverty reduction. We will tell the stories about China more vividly to spread its voice in the post-Games era as we participate in global governance.



The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2017)

Appreciating not only One's Own Culture but also the Cultures of Others

Human history teaches us that what separates people is not mountains and waters or walls of bronze or iron but mind-set barriers. While enhancing people's self-identification globally, world cultural and natural heritage plays a vital role in promoting mutual learning and prosperity of different civilisations and cultures. To this day, the protection of world cultural and natural heritage also serves as a historical basis for "promoting the goal of building a global community of shared future" to a large extent. Shining brilliantly, the beautiful Great Wall of China displays to the world the Chinese cultural concept of harmonious development and conveys the shared values of "appreciating not only one's own culture but also the cultures of others" and "a world of great harmony."

As a world heritage site, the Great Wall is, first of all, material, conveying culture and spirit. In contemporary times, a heritage site should be the first identity of the Great Wall. Protecting the Great Wall pursuant to

the principles of cultural heritage protection and carrying on and making good use of this cultural treasure are matters of great concern to the Chinese Government and to the international community at large who are actively investing in it. It's also the prerequisite and foundation for the Great Wall to play its role as a world heritage site.

In 2006, the Chinese Government promulgated the Regulations on the Protection of the Great Wall, which was China's first national-level legal document for cultural heritage. At the same time, the National Cultural Heritage Administration enforced the implementation of the Work Plan for the Protection of the Great Wall (2005–2014). Nearly 2,000 cultural remains and surveying and mapping workers across the country conducted a six-year investigation into the Great Wall resources and had a better idea of them. They publicised the accurate surveying and mapping data of the Great Wall in 2012. On this basis, China has

completed the construction of the Great Wall resource database and the resource protection and management information system and carried out hundreds of projects to protect and maintain the Great Wall. Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in protecting it, especially at the cultural level, and the legal system for protecting the Great Wall has also been further improved.

In 2019, the National Cultural Heritage Administration issued the Great Wall Protection Master Plan to guide local governments on the protection, repair, day-to-day maintenance, inspection, and monitoring of the Great Wall. The administration also opened the Great Wall Heritage Internet Network, formulated the Measures for the Administration of Great Wall Protectors, and established the Great Wall Conservation Alliance. In the same year, the Chinese Government actively promoted the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park. It issued the construction plan for the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March national culture park. The plan proposes that by the end of 2023, a situation of joint promotion of the protection, inheritance, and utilisation of cultural remains and cultural resources along the Great Wall, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the Long March will have taken shape. A management model with clear rights and responsibilities, efficient operation and standardised supervision will also have been roughly formed. Adhering to the idea of strengthening the top-level design and improving the relevant legal system, the Chinese Government is promoting the construction of the Great Wall National Culture Park in an all-round way. It is by examining the Great Wall and its culture from a more macro perspective to achieve a beneficial interaction, organic coordination, and mutual promoting between the protection of cultural

heritage, the promotion of traditional culture, and the satisfaction of the people's desire for a better life.

The above actions have consolidated the foundation for the Great Wall protection and become high-level protection, management, monitoring, and display project in China in terms of world heritage protection. But that isn't all that the Great Wall protection means. More importantly, the Chinese Government attaches great importance to the practical significance of the Great Wall protection. It will make painstaking efforts to make the Great Wall culture highly compatible with the development strategy of China and the world.

This history of the Great Wall represents one half of the history of the Chinese civilisation. Since modern times, the Great Wall has been endowed with many connotations. The most well-known are its symbolic attributes: the spiritual meaning of being a symbol of the Chinese Nation. From a domestic perspective, the Great Wall has been an essential carrier of the shared cultural psyche of the Chinese people since ancient times. In modern times, the Great Wall is not just the spiritual home of the Chinese people. But many passes and fortresses along the Great Wall have developed into villages, towns, and even cities, becoming their physical homes. It's fair to say that the Great Wall is a living heritage. To protect it is to keep at bay the pathos of homesickness and arouse people's love for their hometown. Exploring and protecting the Great Wall and its culture enable the people to feel the real history, to enhance their cultural taste, and strengthen their national pride, thus increasing China's national cohesion. Meanwhile, the Great Wall's significant global awareness and influence enable us to interpret and display China more visually in terms of its people's diligence and wisdom; its time-honoured,



The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall (2021)

profound civilisation; its splendid literary accomplishment; the superb architectural skills of the ancient Chinese, and its thinking of living in harmony with Nature. To protect the Great Wall is to conserve the Chinese ancestors' spirit of endurance of hardships in pioneer work, the tenacity of survival, harmony of Man and Nature, and creativity and innovation. To protect the Great Wall is to tell the world a good story about China.

At the same time, China's governance can draw from the experience of the Great Wall. It has witnessed the flames of wars, changes of dynasties, battles against aggressors, and trade and business exchanges. The Great Wall was built due to the risk of warfare, but its purpose was to prevent wars. The construction of the Great Wall was a successful practice in handling relations between regimes and ethnic groups. It unwittingly linked the destinies of the ethnic groups "inside" and "outside" the Wall together, thus ensuring the Chinese Nation's continuous growth in a relatively peaceful and stable environment for more than 2,600 years. In peacetime, some passes and

bastions along the Great Wall served as trading ports facilitating the economic interactions between the farming Han people and the nomadic Xiongnu. The fragility of the nomads' economy on the northern grasslands and the high cost of military operations to be organised by the Central Plains regime enabled both parties to understand that "cooperation benefits both, whereas confrontation serves neither." Meanwhile, the Great Wall's systematic and advanced management system by sections, the balance of powers and responsibilities, the distribution of benefits, and the integrated and optimised resources provided valuable experience for modernising China's governance system and capabilities. The Great Wall is an essential heritage of the Yellow River Basin and the only accessible passage on the ancient Silk Road, carrying the honours and dreams of various ethnic peoples. Since the opening of the Chinese section of the "Silk Road" in the Han Dynasty, the Hexi Corridor and the Xinjiang section of the Great Wall played an unwitting role in protecting envoys and merchants. The Great Wall is a significant resource of cultural



The Simatai section of the Great Wall (2021)

relics and concrete evidence of the long history of friendly exchanges between China and the countries along the “One Belt, One Road.” The Great Wall was built to keep enemies at bay, but it has never refused communication. The ancient Great Wall embodies the Chinese wisdom of a global community of shared future. In today’s globalised world, the Great Wall is a symbol of inclusiveness and peace, of international exchanges and communication. In the face of economic development, environmental protection, and other issues, humanity is already a community with a shared future, with the excellent integration of civilisations unfolding ahead. Therefore, the eternal human theme of safeguarding peace, protecting civilisation, and ensuring exchanges is the current value of the Great Wall.

An ancient Chinese poet once chanted, “The moon of Qin shines upon the passes

of Han. The Great Wall’s long, but from it returns no man.” As a cultural treasure trove linking people from the East and the West in history, the Great Wall has witnessed humans struggling together for their happiness and demonstrated the beauty of human creation. “The aspiration for all that is beautiful is a common pursuit of humanity that nothing can hold back. Civilisations don’t have to clash with each other; what is needed are eyes to see the beauty in all civilisations.”¹ Each nation, while appreciating beauty, can keep innovating and developing its culture by making equal exchanges, promoting dialogues embracing inclusiveness and diversity, and complementing each other.

May the charm of the Great Wall inspire the flowers in the garden of world civilisations to bloom in all their beauty!

¹ Keynote Speech by Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China at the Opening Ceremony of the Conference on Dialog of Asian Civilisations, Beijing, May 15, 2019.

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